

VOL. 2 ISSUE #1

JAN-JUNE 2022

# Light Trail

The official biannual newsletter of Agricultural Training Institute-Regional Training Center 02



**DIGITAL FARMER  
IN THE MAKING**

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## ABOUT THE COVER

Andres "Andie" Agustin is a 69-year-old farmer from Alfonso Castañeda, Nueva Vizcaya. Andie is a newly accredited LSA cooperater in their municipality.

He uses the digital age to his own advantage and improves his farm by researching in various apps and websites such as Google and Youtube. Andie is an emerging digital farmer who dreams to also help young and old farmers in their town through his learning site.

## ABOUT THE TITLE

Light trail is mostly commonly associated with photography which pertains to a point of light with a trail stretching from its final position.

As a bureau of the Department of Agriculture which focuses in delivering extension services and capacity-building to its stakeholders, ATI stretches its hand to extend support to agricultural extension workers, farmers and other stakeholders. ATI lights their way to adapt advanced and effective farming practices and technologies, and acquire new knowledge from it.

Light Trail is the official biannual newsletter of ATI-RTC02 which aims to inform, educate and inspire its readers about agriculture and fisheries through every page.

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## ATI, PARTNERS CELEBRATE FIRST HVC WEEK HIGHLIGHTING FARM DIVERSIFICATION



The Agricultural Training Institute – Regional Training Center 02 kicked off the celebration of the 2022 High Value Crops Week with the theme: “Farm Diversification with High Value Crops: Key to Recovery and Sustained Growth.” The celebration was held last April 11-13, 2022 at the agency compound in Malasin, San Mateo, Isabela and livestreamed via Facebook Live.

Supported by the enactment of the Republic Act No. 7900 also known as High Value Crops Development Act of 1995 and proclamation number 469, Series of 2018, the month of April was declared as High Value Crops (HVC) Week and “Filipino Food Month” respectively. It led to strengthen the implementation of the HVCDP as one of the banner programs of the Department of Agriculture that focuses to the attainment of food self-sufficiency, economic growth and enhancement of consumers’ health and welfare. An Agri-fair featuring the products of ATI-Learning Site for Agriculture from different parts of the region was the highlight of the celebration.

The event was participated by ATI stakeholders, PhilRice Isabela and BPI-NSQCS staff, farmer-leaders, youth, and other stakeholders. The HVCDP week aims to give promotion, recognition, and importance, to high-value crop products from vegetables, fruits, and ornamentals. The three-day activity focuses in promoting the production, processing, marketing, and distribution of high value

crops from fruits, highland and lowland vegetables, and even ornamentals. ATI-RTC Director Imelda M. Guillermo, in her opening message, expressed that she is beyond grateful that through Learning Sites for Agriculture, ATI is always looking for opportunities and convergence with other agencies to attain development in agriculture. Also, Mr. Jhimcelle V. Salvador, OIC-Chief of Career Development and Management Services Section, explained the agenda of the celebration with lectures and discussions from resource speakers, open forum,

product display, and different contests. PhilRice OIC-Branch Director Joy Bartolome A. Duldulao, shared that this month is also the celebration of Filipino Food Month that aims to promote and transmit Filipino culinary traditions, and the importance of value adding of agricultural products especially that there is oversupply or overproduction of agricultural produce, specifically of high value crops. Meanwhile, Mr. Julito T. Claveron, Jr., the Chief of BPI-NSQCS Tuguegarao City Station, mentioned that as their...  
*continued on page 5*

## VARIOUS AGENCIES CONVERGE TO ENHANCE AGRI-FISHERY EXTENSION DELIVERY IN NUEVA VIZCAYA

Regional and provincial government agencies, and local government units join in the Inter-Agency Consultation meeting to discuss plans for the implementation of various agri-fishery interventions in Nueva Vizcaya. The meeting was held at Alfonso Castañeda, Nueva Vizcaya on April 27-28, 2022.

The agencies presented their accomplishments and targets for the year which cater farmers, fishers, and other stakeholders. They also discussed coordination on some projects to avoid duplication of areas and participants during trainings.

One of the highlights of the meeting, the agencies expressed their support by pledging commitment to Mr. Grande Agustin, a farmer

from Alfonso Castañeda, who was eyed by ATI-RTC 02 as new Learning Site for Agriculture cooperator in the said municipality.

During the meeting, Dr. Roberto Busania, RTD for Operations and Extension of DA-RFO2, shared key points concerning food security, namely: intensifying food production, mobilizing movements of products, diversification of crops, finding alternative animal feeds sustaining feed formulation, enhancement of practices, and checking of world supply of food.

The group also visited some of the projects in the municipality like dragonfruit farms, rabbitry and high value crop production for possible collaboration.

■ **ASFontanilla**

## DINAPIGUE DUMAGATS TRAIN ON VARIOUS BACKYARD AGRI-ENTERPRISE TRAININGS

To empower the Indigenous Peoples Community in Dinapigue, Isabela the Agricultural Training Institute conducted three backyard Agri-enterprise trainings to Dumagats on May 18-20, 2022. The said trainings were Training on Free-range Chicken Egg Production, Training on Mallard Egg Production, and Training on Backyard Integrated Farming System.

Sixty-four members of the IP community participated in the said trainings. The participants were trained to produce a natural feed mix using indigenous ingredients available in their environment. With this, the participants are expected to improve the situation of their livestock such as pigs, chickens, and ducks.

On the other hand, participants learned and experienced some post-harvest technologies for egg sorting, fabrication of incubator, and salted egg making. Also, they were equipped with the necessary knowledge on concepts and strategies of backyard integrated farming and its benefits through actual demonstration of different methods of gardening, vermicomposting, and use of natural farming inputs which can be used for both crops and livestock. Through its capability-building program, ATI empowers the IPs so that they can engage in productive activities and livelihood projects



to make themselves reliant and become responsible citizens of the community. Republic Act 8371, commonly known as Indigenous Peoples Right Act (IPRA), enacted in 1997, sets out the legal framework for the rights of the indigenous peoples. The law mandates the government to “recognize and promote the rights of indigenous peoples/indigenous cultural communities

(ICC’s) within the framework of national unity and development and to protect the rights of ICCs to their ancestral lands to ensure their economic, social, and cultural well-being. In support to this, the ATI is doing its best to provide opportunities for the IPs for growth and development that will uplift their living condition. **■ CCSabatin Jr**

## ATI-RTC 02, PARTNERS READY TO REVIVE SWINE INDUSTRY IN REGION 2



With the goal to revive the swine industry in the region, the Agricultural Training Institute-Regional Training Center 02 (ATI-RTC 02) called for a consultation meeting with the Department of Agriculture Regional Field Office 2 (DA-RFO 02), Bureau of Animal Industry-Veterinary Quarantine Services (BAI-VQS) Region 02 and the Provincial Veterinary Offices in Cagayan, Isabela, Quirino and Nueva Vizcaya on February 2, 2022.

The consultation meeting highlighted the discussion of future plans of the partner agencies in combating African Swine Fever (ASF) in region

2. Other agenda were the presentation of 2021 accomplishment for ASF program, 2022 ASF program targets and the Guideline on the Recovery and Declaration of Freedom from ASF for Local Government Units (LGU). A workshop was also done by the agencies to come up with a workplan for the 2023 national livestock training and extension program.

By strengthening the capacity of the region to fight against ASF, Dr. Benjamin Ike Paguyu, BAI-VQS Regional Veterinary Quarantine Officer emphasized the need to establish a task force in ASF checkpoints as

a way to control the spread of the disease. *“It is important to educate hog raisers with the minimum biosecurity protocol,”* Dr. Paguyu said.

Through various trainings and information campaigns steered in 2021, the partnering agencies are optimistic with the effects of educating and spreading awareness among hog raisers.

In the consultation meeting, Center Director Imelda M. Guillermo suggested that ATI, DA-RFO 02, PVET, BAI and LGUs should have a convergence project such as identifying an existing learning site to showcase practices on biosecurity and low-cost feeds for backyard hog raising. Meanwhile, Dr. Maurianne Turingan, national livestock program focal person mentioned that, those who were given with sentinel pigs can also be identified as a model of biosecured swine backyard and low-cost feeds production where other hog raisers can emulate.

Moreover, Assistant Center Director Dr. Claris M. Alaska said in her welcome remark, *“Let us help one another in reviving the livestock industry. Let us continue to work as One DA.”*

Further, a strengthened partnership among agencies is very much crucial especially in securing regional borders by implementing stricter protocols to control the widespread recurrence of ASF in the region.

**■ MCSimeon**

## TOT ON COFFEE-BASED INTEGRATED FARMING SYSTEM CAPACITATES TRAINERS IN QUIRINO

Training of trainers capacitated 25 participants with knowledge, skills, and attitude on coffee-based integrated farming system at DISADECO, Diffun, Quirino on April 25-29, 2022.

The provincial local government unit of Quirino has been working on boosting the coffee industry in the province by partnering with various agencies. Thus, the conduct of a coffee-based training may help the locals to contribute to this cause. During the training, agricultural extension workers and farmers leaders learned good agricultural practices for coffee production, food safety act, good manufacturing practices, and coffee-based integrated farming systems. Potato, tomato, dry beans, cabbage, carrots, banana and coconut are

among the crops that can be integrated with the coffee-based integrated farming system. Excelsa and Robusta are the available coffee varieties that can be found in the province. Furthermore, the training covered post-harvest handling to processing of coffee. During hands-on activities, participants learned pesticide residue analysis, coffee plant cloning and different methods of processing green coffee bean like de-pulping, hulling, sorting, roasting, grinding and brewing.

*"This training gave me a lot of knowledge regarding coffee from seed to cup as end-product. I learned also the importance of integrated farming to earn more profit or income rather than [using] monocropping,"* said Joanne S. Fernandez, AEW of Office

of the Provincial Agriculturist-Quirino. During her opening message, ATI-RTC 02 Center Director Imelda M. Guillermo stressed the importance of integrated farming system. She mentioned that every farmer must engage in integrated farming and not just in monocropping to achieve the *"Masaganang Ani, Mataas na Kita"* vision of the Department of Agriculture.

The trainees are expected to share their learnings to the farmers in their localities as stated in the action plans that they wrote during the training. The TOT is one of the interventions of ATI to empower the AEWs and farmer-leaders as part of the Provincial-led Agri-Fishery and Extension System (PAFES) in Quirino.

■ASFontanilla

## AEWS LEARN UPDATED RCMAS THROUGH REFRESHER COURSE

Agricultural extension workers (AEWs) coming from various provinces of region 2 learned the updated Rice Crop Manager Advisory Service (RCMAS) during a refresher course conducted at ATI-RTC 02, San Mateo, Isabela from April 26-28, 2022.

Resource persons taught and demonstrated new added features in the application with its new version, RCMAS 4.0. The optimized version has the following components: farmer and farm lot registration, geo-referencing of farm lots, generation and printing of farmer ID cards, sending of auto-generated text messages to farmers' mobile phone numbers, and farm monitoring to complement RCM and further increase benefits to farmers.

*"Sa training na ito, na-impress ako sa new features ng RCMAS application dahil para sa akin mas madaling gamitin at magkakaroon na rin ng database or information ng mga farmer if ever na may interview na ng*



*RCM for the next planting season,"* said Noralyn B. Ababa, one of the participants and AEW from LGU-Claveria, Cagayan.

To increase recall, the participants were refreshed on the basic features of the application again, namely: RCM

user registration and RCMAS online.

The training concluded on April 28, 2022 with 23 participants awarded with their completion certificates.

■ASFontanilla

## ATI, PARTNERS CELEBRATES FIRST HVC ...

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...contribution to the HVC industry, they ensured high quality seeds and planting materials for farmers and growers. He also emphasized that high value crops are not just vegetables but also fruits and ornamentals.

Director Leah Pulido Ocampo, the Regional Director of Department of Trade and Industry-Region 2 served as the guest speaker during the opening program emphasized that without the presence of the Department of Agriculture and the other agencies like ATI, BPI, PhilRice and other they might hardly promote, package, and market different products locally and globally. *"We really need convergence at dahil diyan ngayon ko mas lalong nakikita na kayong mga farmers, ang*

*mga learning site cooperators, ang aming malalaking investors. Kayo ang may mahahabang pasensya at may pagpupunyagi na makapasok sa malalaking merkado,"* she added. Ocampo also introduced the "three rising star" of the Department of Trade and Industry specifically, the Munggo, Ube, and Calamansi production and processing which aims to enter not only in the local market but in the global market. Also, she encouraged the farmers to be more competitive and to be global suppliers and exporters.

Afterwards, a lecture on Product Labelling and Packaging was explained by Ms. Emma Jane P. Domingo from DTI Region 2 of LGU San Mateo.

Various produce and products from different learning sites for agriculture like "Pinakbet" vegetables, fruits, coffee, turmeric, tablea, mushroom, fruit bearing tree seedlings, lettuce, cabbage, carrots, sugar beets, potatoes, cavendish banana, eggs, and many others are being displayed and purchased throughout the activity.

With the HVC Week celebration, it reminds everyone that farm diversification with high value crops involves planting more than one crop varieties with the integration of animal husbandry, poultry, and fisheries that ensures additional source of income and can pave the way for economic growth and sustainable agriculture.

■MCCConstantino

## ATI AT 35: INNOVATING ONEDA AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION STRATEGIES BEYOND THE NEW NORMAL

The Agricultural Training Institute is celebrating its 35th Founding Anniversary this year with the theme “Innovating OneDA Agricultural Extension Strategies Beyond the New Normal.” A week-long celebration commenced on January 25, was conducted at ATI Central Office in Quezon City and in different training centers nationwide.

Agriculture Secretary William Dar, DA Assistant Secretary and Spokesperson Noel Reyes, ATI Director Rosana Mula and ATI Assistant Director Antonietta Arceo led the opening program and launching of the ATI Operations Manual and Skill Up webinar series.

ATI-RTC 02 Center Director Imelda M. Guillermo together with the staff and partners joined the opening program and other events via Zoom and Facebook Live.

In his message, Secretary Dar emphasized the important role of ATI as ‘capacity builder for extension workers, farmer-leaders, and those involved in the national programs for development, extension and many other.’

*“Through its solid and robust network of training centers and private extension partners, we continue to see the ATI as the forefront in the professionalization of our sector, particularly in strengthening the agriculture career system, education and training on agribusiness management,*

*and youth and women empowerment,”* the agri chief said during the Awards and Recognition Program in the afternoon.

*“Even at the height of the pandemic, we witnessed how relentless the ATI was, under the leadership of Dir. Rosana Mula, in making sure that farmers, fishers, and agri-entrepreneurs continue to learn and improve their knowledge and skills in entrepreneurship and farm business management through virtual and blended training programs,”* he added.

Meanwhile, Dir. Mula said that the ATI Operations manual ‘is part of our commitment for a smooth transition and continuity of the OneDA Reform Agenda’.

She also recognized the contributions and effort of every ATI staff in delivering capacity building and other extension support system to different beneficiaries and stakeholders.

ATI was established in January 1987 through Executive Order No. 116 which merged the Bureau of Agricultural Extension (BAEx), the Philippine Agricultural Training Council (PATC) and the Philippine Training Centers for Rural Development (PTC-RD). At present, it has 16 training centers spread across the country.

■ **VBCaliguiran**

## ATI TRAINS NEW SET OF LFT AS PARTNERS IN EXTENSION DELIVERY

Complementing the limited number of extension workers in the Local Government Units, the Agricultural Training Institute -Regional Training Center 02 conducted Specialized Training Course for New Local Farmer Technicians (LFTs). It was conducted on June 6-10, 2022 at ATI-RTC 02, San Mateo, Isabela.

The 31 new LFTs from different provinces were trained on the principles and keychecks of the PalayCheck System, ICT-based tools and resources, extension delivery system, and transformational leadership. Through the training, the LFTs were supplemented with knowledge and skills that will help them in conducting extension activities.

*“I’ve learned to be a responsible LFT. I’ve learned a lot in every activity and also there are many technologies that we should share to our farmers specially the Palaycheck System to improve their practice and to increase their yield as well as their income,”* Ms. Zoraida Licayu said.

*“Dahil sa training na ito ay nalaman ko ang tunay na tungkulin ko bilang isang Local Farmer Technician sa aming bayan. Nais ko ding magpasalamat sa mga RP natin dahil sa kanila ay nahasa kami sa tamang way ng pagdedeliver ng aming mga lectures sa mga farmers sa aming lugar at maipapamahagi din namin yung mga bagong technology sa kanila na pwede nilang gamitin upang tumaas ang kanilang ani,”* Romeo Peralta of San Mateo said.

LFTs are partners of the Department of Agriculture and LGUs in the provision of extension services towards improving rice productivity. They are expected to share their learnings, technologies and practices to their fellow farmers in the community.

■ **MCCConstantino**

## ATI-RTC 02, LGUS JOIN FOR A CONSULTATION WORKSHOP ON STAKEHOLDERS’ TRAINING NEEDS



To ensure that the training needs of the stakeholders are addressed, the Agricultural Training Institute-Regional Training Center 02 (ATI-RTC 02) met with various local government units (LGUs) for a consultation workshop on the different banner programs. The meetings were held in Nueva Vizcaya, Quirino, Isabela and Cagayan from March 22-24, 2022.

These banner programs, which include rice, corn, high value crops, organic agriculture, and livestock, of the Department of Agriculture (DA) are created to help address food security, poverty alleviation and sustainable growth. Started in 2019, the consultation workshop

is held every first quarter of the year. It aims to assess the training needs of extension workers and farmer-leaders to support the extension program and services implementation of LGUs. The output of the workshop will be the basis in creating policies that address gaps and issues in the local level.

*“Dito sa Villaverde, sa agricultural sector, kailangan ng mga farmers na malaman ang mga makabagong pamamaraan ng pagsasaka. Para naman sa mga LGU [staff], maganda ang mga training katulad ng TOT,”* said Mr. Arsenio T. Mariñas, Municipal Agriculturist of LGU-Villaverde, Nueva Vizcaya. For Mr. Mariñas, the consultation

meeting helped in identifying issues and concerns in the agricultural sector. For him, existing partnership between the different agencies under DA and local government counterparts contributes in better program implementation of various agricultural sector banner programs down to the local level.

In the meeting, Dr. Claris M. Alaska, TCS I and Assistant Center Director, presented the ATI policies and directions to give the stakeholders an overview of the agency programs and projects. Mr. Aldrin E. Abarca, PEO I, presented the FY 2021 accomplishment highlights. The ATI-RTC 02 catered to over 6,000 trained participants which are mostly extension workers and farmers. Meanwhile, Ms. Mayflor R. Macmac, Planning Officer II discussed the FY 2022 activities where the AEWs from different LGUs can participate in.

Continued support of ATI-RTC 02 to the localities through LGUs strengthened partnership with them. They are also expected to implement the programs and projects that are directly tasked to them by the DA to correspond to the programs of the Department and its attached-agencies.

■ **ASCFontanilla**

## DIGITAL FARMING TO REACH FARMERS THROUGH NEW DFP TRAINERS

New set of trainers graduated from the Training of Trainers on Digital Farmers Program (DFP) and are expected to introduce digital farming to farmers. The training was held at ATI-RTC 02, San Mateo, Isabela from June 14-17, 2022. Twenty-five agricultural extension workers (AEWs) from various municipalities of Isabela, Cagayan, and Nueva Vizcaya joined in the training.

The four-day training focused on the first two levels of the program, DFP 101 and 102. The two levels cover Smartphone 101, basic and advanced agriculture apps, social media marketing, internet safety tips, e-commerce, and social media content creation.

The trained AEWs are expected to head the roll-out of the program in their municipalities that caters farmers and youth. They accepted the role to bring digitalized farming down to the farmers. The farmers shall be trained in maximizing the use of smartphone and other ICT resources in their farming activities.

*"Para sa amin sa Calayan, Cagayan, ang DFP ay isang level up para sa mga farmers,"* said Catherine Payas, AEW from LGU-Calayan. She also added that she will coordinate with their local chief executive and municipal agriculturist to improve their internet connection. Better connection shall help farmers to access various agriculture apps and social media platforms.



Last April 19-22, 39 agricultural extension workers (AEWs) also graduated as trainers from the program.

*"Ang training na ito ay makatutulong sa mga magsasaka na mas mapadali ang kanilang pagbebenta ng kanilang mga produkto. Ang mga farmers ay mas matututo ng tamang timing kung kailan sila magharvest ng kanilang produkto upang hindi masira ang mga ito. Matututo pa silang mag-apply ng tamang amount ng fertilizer at maaari pang ma-compute ang kanilang mga gastos at kita,"* said Odeza Nagtalon of Jones, Isabela, one of the participants during the sharing

of impression of the participants. Launched in 2019, DFP aims to equip the farmers with knowledge and skills in using the basic ICT tools including social media, climate and weather monitoring applications, and online activity and payment options. It consists of ladderized approach in helping farmers make better farming decisions, access more market opportunities, and increase their livelihood and income. The program contents are broken down in to three level; namely DFP 101 (Beginner), DFP 102 (Intermediate), and DFP 103 (Advance).

■ ASCFontanilla

## TOT ON BANANA PRODUCTION GRADUATES SET TO HELP BOOST BANANA INDUSTRY IN REGION 2



Twenty-five new graduates of Training of Trainers on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) on Banana Production are expected to help boost the Banana Industry in Region 2 to be on par with the banana producers and suppliers in the southern part of the country. The training included post-harvest handling and processing of the crop which was conducted at ATI-RTC 02, San Mateo, Isabela from June 6-10, 2022.

The trainees learned the status of the banana industry in the region and the basic principles and concepts of good agricultural practices (GAP) and its application for GAP compliance. Also, they showed their skills in post-harvest handling and processing, and discussed market product analysis, labelling and marketing. These sets of knowledge and skills are both relevant in improving the banana industry.

*"At first, I had a doubt in coming into this training because we are already planting banana since my childhood. But I still attended because that's the order of my boss. And I am really glad because all I thought I know already what banana production is. But then, there are so many lectures/discussions yet to learn about especially on Good Agricultural Practices, GMPs and post-harvest handling and processing. New knowledge and skills unlocked,"* Engr. Gerald B. Carmelo, an AEW from San Agustin, Isabela said.

Grouped into teams, the trainees produced various products using banana as primary ingredient. Some of the products were muffins, marmalade, and chips. Agricultural extension workers and farmer-leaders from various municipalities in Region 2 comprised the trainees.

*"Marami talaga kaming natutunan lalo na sa good agricultural practices at sa good manufacturing practices. Sana ay maiapply din namin ito lalo na sa mga produkto namin na sana ay ma-GAP Certified din. Kaya as extension worker, ito ang challenge sa atin kung paano natin implement ang lahat ng mga program na ito sa ating mga municipalities,"* AEW John Christopher M. Suhat of Alfonso Castañeda, Nueva Vizcaya said.

■ ASCFontanilla

# BABAY TRAININGS TO BID GOODBYE TO AFRICAN SWINE FEVER



Through the conduct of Bantay ASF sa Barangay (BABay): Training on Biosecurity, Surveillance and Sample Collection for Additional Barangay Biosecurity Officers in Region 2, Agricultural Training Institute-Regional Training Center 02 continues to capacitate Barangay

Biosecurity Officers (BBO) to effectively combat African Swine Fever (ASF).

On June 24, 2022, another batch of capacitated BBOs graduated from the training. Twenty graduates are added to the roster of capacitated BBOs in the region. The

participants are from Nueva Vizcaya, an area which was also extremely affected by the ASF. BBOs were equipped with necessary knowledge and skills on Biosecurity, disease surveillance, and specimen collection for laboratory testing which are useful in combating ASF in the local level. They were also insured in PCIC.

As ASF wiped out most of the country's swine industry in the past years, BABay trainings become one of the initiatives of ATI and National Livestock Program of the Department of Agriculture (DA) to help revive the swine industry and to easily detect, manage, and prevent any new diseases. The training covered the discussion on Bantay ASF sa Barangay Project, and guidelines in swine movement; biosecurity audit; practice of appropriate biosecurity measure, collecting different specimen and handling, packing and transport of specimen; and preparation of supplies, materials, tolls in collection and transport of specimen and animals for collection. The ATI-RTC 02 will also conduct ASF information caravan in selected municipalities from June 27-29, 2022. BABay ASF is a collaboration effort of the DA, local government units, and the private sector that aims to restore and revive the swine industry in the country.

■ **ASCFonantilla**

## ATI-RTC 2 BRINGS KNOWLEDGE, INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGIES CLOSER TO STAKEHOLDERS

With the goal to bridge the gap between information and technology, and the farmers, traders, processors, entrepreneurs and other stakeholders, the Agricultural Training Institute-Regional Training Center 2 (ATI-RTC 2) awarded Farmers Information and Technology Services (FITS) logistics, supplies and IEC materials support for the establishment of 25 FITS Kiosks and enhancement of 6 FITS Centers to various LGUs and farm schools. It was held at ATI-RTC 2 on December 14, 2021.

The FITS Kiosk and FITS Center serve as library of farmers and other stakeholders making knowledge, information and technologies accessible for them. It is also one way to strengthen the link among the technology generators, technology servers and technology adopters.

During the awarding ceremony, ATI-RTC 2 Center Director Imelda M. Guillermo emphasized that Learning Sites and MLGUs play a big role in improving access to information, knowledge and technology of farmers and other stakeholders. She also recognized their efforts being the

partner of the center in delivering extension services in region 2. Meanwhile, Dr. Claris M. Alaska, Assistant Center Director presented the FITS Kiosk and FITS Center project overview giving emphasis on the goals of FITS and the functions of Learning Sites and MLGUs in providing access to information, knowledge and technologies.

The FITS Kiosk were awarded with display cabinet, printer, tarpaulin and IEC materials. On the other hand, 6MLGUs were also granted with tablet, display cabinet, printer, tarpaulin and IEC materials. These grants were given upon the request of the different learning sites and MLGUs through a letter of intent approved by the Center Director. A Letter of Agreement was signed between the center and the FITS Kiosk and Center Managers to forge the implementation of the project. A monitoring will also be done to make sure that they will be able to maintain and follow the agreements set.

In her impression Ms. Gweneth R. Brillo, Farm School Owner of Brillo's Integrated Farm said: "From the start sinuorthan ninyo po kami at ginuide

*niyo po kami. Kaya labis po kaming nagagalak at natutuwa (agyaman) dahil sa patuloy ninyong pagsuporta at kung hindi dahil po sa inyo ay wala po kami dito ngayon. Bilang pinakabata sa lahat ng farm school owners ako po ay maraming natutunan at marami pa pong matututunan. Lahat po tayo ay nagtutulungan at hindi po tayo naghihilahan pababa. Iyon po ang maganda pagdating sa ATI-RTC 02. Sa lahat po ng binigay niyo, printer, IEC materials at cabinet ay napakalaking tulong po ito lalo na sa ating farmers. Sa pamamagitan po nito ay mas marami pang matututunan ang ating mga farmers, mas marami pa po tayong maibibigay na impormasyon sa kanila patungkol sa pagsasaka. Iyon lamang po at ang goal po natin ay mapataas ang ani at mapababa ang gastusin ng ating mga farmer. "*

Moreover, it is expected that the FITS Kiosks and FITS Centers will be able to help bridge the gap between technology generators and technology adopters by improving access to information that they deserve.

■ **MCSimeon**



# SOA-SRA BACK ON AIRWAVES IN REGION 02

The PalayAralan: Makabagong Pagsasaka sa Himpapawid is now back on the airwaves of Region 02. The School-on-the Air program was officially launched last May 25, 2022 by the Agricultural Training Institute – Regional Training Center 02, Department of Agriculture-Regional Field Office 02 and Philippine Rice Research Institute-Isabela Branch, provincial and municipal local government units of Nueva Vizcaya and Quirino.

The SOA-SRA is being broadcasted in six (6) radio stations across the region. At least 2,000 farmer-enrollees are participating from the provinces of Nueva Vizcaya and Quirino, since these areas are the identified sites based on the level of rice productivity. There are also peripheral listeners from neighboring provinces covered by the carrier radio stations.

During the launching, the overview was presented by ATI-RTC 2 Assistant Center Director Dr. Claris M. Alaska. She emphasized that the program will feature Smart Rice Agriculture technologies developed by the R&D agencies. It aims to help catalyze agriculture modernization through massive and sustained education of smallholder farmers and local intermediaries on modern and innovative technologies and approaches on smart rice production. It shall share cutting-edge technologies and innovative approaches to help maximize rice productivity in medium and low yield provinces through radio, amplifying the limited reach of agricultural extension workers.



She further stressed that for this this year, it will be focusing on nutrient management, pest management and water management to address the current problem being faced by the farmers. The experts will be from DA-RFO 02, DA-RCPC, PhilRice, PCIC, DOST-PAGASA and ATI.

The SOA-SRA program aims to create awareness and impart knowledge on smart rice technologies among target participants from the provinces of Nueva Vizcaya and Quirino to provide continuous learning to our rice farmers.

As the DA's capacity builder and catalyst of the extension system, the ATI takes the lead in the implementation and in collaboration with other

agencies under the Department of Agriculture (DA) and other institutions for the knowledge sharing on various agriculture and fisheries technologies. ATI-RTC 2 Center Director Imelda M. Guillermo in her message reiterated that through the SOA more famers will be reached through radio with strong support of the partner LGUs.

Highlighting the activity were the messages given by the ATI Deputy Director Dir. Antonieta J. Arceo, PhilRice-Isabela Assistant Branch Director Fernando Garcia, Regional Technical Director for Operations and Extension...

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## TRAINED FACILITATOR-TRAINERS TO WORK EFFICIENTLY WITH THE FARMERS FOR EFFECTIVE RICE EXTENSION SERVICES DELIVERY



Towards its objective to capacitate extension workers, farm school owners and training facilitators on the delivery of extension services, ATI conducted a Training of Trainers on the Production of High-Quality Inbred Rice and Seeds, and

Farm Mechanization on January 27-28 via online platform and face-to-face session on February 2-11, 2022 at ATI San Mateo Center. The farm school facilitators are also responsible in equipping the farmers with knowledge and skills on rice production

technology, farm mechanization, and information and communication technology (ICT) based tools. This leads to one of the key strategies to transform Philippine Agriculture through education and training. "Napakagandang programa ng RCEF ang ganitong mga trainings kasi nakaka-develop sila ng mga taong magiging daan for the success ng maraming farmers dito sa ating bansa," said Ms. Stephany C. Andres of BH Roque Integrated Farm, Santiago City.

In this training, the 30 farm school facilitators strengthened their sense of mission and instilled to their minds through the transformational leadership discussion with Mr. Jei-ar M. Limos, technical staff of ATI-RTC 02. To motivate them to work more for the famers, Dr. Marvin B. Luis, Regional Rice Focal Person of DA RFO 02 discussed the Rice Industry Situationer and the OneDA Reform Agenda.

Moreover, the participants were equipped with knowledge and skills on rice seed production technology through PalayCheck...

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## ATI-RTC 2 SHOWCASES MUNGGO RECIPES, BY-PRODUCTS OF ITS HOST MUNICIPALITY, SAN MATEO



The Agricultural Training Institute-Regional Training Center (ATI-RTC) 2 joined the commemoration of this year's Filipino Food Month (FFM) through a documentary showcasing munggo recipes and munggo by-products of San Mateo, Isabela known as the Munggo Capital of the Philippines.

Filipino Food Month or Buwan ng Kalutong Pilipino is celebrated every April by Presidential Proclamation No. 469 signed in 2018. FFM is a national event aimed at appreciating, preserving, promoting, and ensuring the transmission of the rich Filipino culinary traditions and treasures to future generations as well as supporting various industries, farmers, and agri-communities. The Philippine Culinary Heritage Movement, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Tourism, the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, and the Philippine

Culinary Heritage Movement are leading the Filipino Food Month or Buwan ng Kalutong Pilipino in 2022 with the theme "Pagkaing Pilipino, Susi sa Pag-unlad at Pagbabago."

To show support to this endeavor, ATI-RTC 2 featured and promoted munggo farming, munggo recipes and munggo by-products of San Mateo, Isabela through a video documentary livestreamed via Facebook page of the Center and partners on April 27, 2022. The video documentary covered the demonstration of munggo recipes by the Rural Improvement Club President Ms. Eden V. Ramil together with her member Ms. Carmelita G. Pucut of Barangay 2, San Mateo, Isabela. The demonstration aimed to showcase their secret recipe in cooking 'guinisang munggo' as a viand and 'lelot balatong' as snack. Munggo is commonly served by Filipinos

every Friday. According to Ms. Carmelita G. Pucut, she serves munggo to her family every Friday because it is the day where her whole family is complete and munggo is one of their favorites.

*"Munggo is a super food, very rich siya in a lot of ways. It has carbohydrate, it has a protein, and we could also get from munggo several vitamins and minerals,"* said Dr. Ruth Cantor, Municipal Health Officer of San Mateo, Isabela. When asked about the idea of people that munggo causes arthritis, she said that munggo is not bad for the health but she would always emphasize that consumption of munggo should be in moderation.

Meanwhile, there are at least 7, 000 hectares of rice farm planted with munggo in San Mateo. Based on the data recorded by the Philippine Statistics Authority, Isabela is the among top munggo producing provinces with 5,597.65 metric tons harvested in 2020 from an area of 12, 510.75 hectares.

## ATI-RTC 2 CONDUCTS TRAINING OF TRAINERS ON FAW MANAGEMENT

To ensure long-term management options in controlling Fall Army Worm infestation to crops specifically corn in region 2, the Department of Agriculture (DA) through the Agricultural Training Institute and Regional Crop Protection Center (RCPC) conducted Training of Trainers on FAW management for AEW's and farmer leaders. This will also help create a pool of FAW experts that can be tapped to provide technical assistance to farmers in the field.

Thirty-one Agricultural Extension Workers and farmer leaders in corn producing municipalities in the region attended the 3-day training last March 4-6, 2022 at ATI-RTC 2 Malasin San Mateo, Isabela. Experts from the DA-RFO 02, DA-RCPC able to enhance participants' knowledge

and skills on FAW management protocol, prevention practices; suppression techniques and methods; field surveillance and identification of vulnerable areas. Use of digital applications on FAW surveillance was also introduced.

As indicated in their action plan, they are expected to help intensify the information drive and technical assistance to control the infestation of FAW in the region.

The participants expressed their appreciation and gratitude for the opportunity given to them attending the said training through their impressions.

■ **FCYuro**

In an interview, Municipal Agriculturist Emiliano Camba said that almost 100% of the rice farmers in their municipality are practicing munggo-after-rice cropping system for decades now. This practice has helped the farmers improve their socio-economic condition in which they were able to generate income from their munggo harvest aside from rice.

Likewise, through the years, they have developed munggo-based products such as noodles, coffee, chips, polvoron among others. These are readily available at their Pasalubong Center. With this venture, the municipality of San Mateo is eyeing for exportation of their munggo by-products in the near future.

■ **MCSimeon**

## ATI NEWLY TRAIN ON MONITORING ASF THROUGH QUANTUM GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM

The Department of Agriculture is now using the Quantum Geographic Information System (QGIS) for the monitoring and surveillance of the African Swine Fever (ASF) in the country.

A two-day training on QGIS was conducted by the ATI for AEWs as part of the Bantay ASF sa Barangay Program.

The first batch was conducted on February 17-18, 2022 and participated by AEWs from different municipalities of Isabela.

The training aims to capacitate the AEWs with supplementary knowledge and appropriate skills on QGIS. It focuses on data encoding and preparation of zoning map for ASF monitoring, surveillance and reporting system. The QGIS is an essential open-source software and tool that allows users for analyzing, viewing, and editing spatial information in composing and exporting graphical maps.

Meanwhile, Mr. John Meynard U. Laguitan of LGU-Luna, Isabela mentioned on his impression: *“Nagkaroon ako ng idea and knowledge sa kung papano iset-up o gamitin ang QGIS. Sa una mahirap at nakakalito nga lang ang paggamit ng system na ito pero dahil na din sa masipag at matiyagang pagtuturo ng resource person kami ay natuto. Syempre, salamat po sa lahat ng mga staff at kapwa ko participants na naging kasama sa training na ito.”*

The training is part of the BABay ASF Program of the Department of Agriculture. It was conducted in partnership with the DA Regional Field Office 02 and Provincial Veterinary Office of Isabela. At the end of the training, the participants prepared their livestock density map intended for their municipality or city.

■ **MCConstantino**

## TRAINED FACILITATOR-TRAINER...

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...System that was discussed by the rice specialists of ATI-RTC 02, Mr. Jhimcelle Salvador, Mr. Orlando Tecson, Engr. Berverly G. Sanchez, and Engr. Johnson S. Lameg. Rice insect pests and diseases and its management considerations was presented by Mr. Wilbert C. Crisologo of DA-RCPC. Engr. Richie L. Veal with the technical staff of BPI-NSQCS discussed and demonstrated the laboratory standards and seed certification procedures. To be more tech-savvy, topics on ICT-based tools in agriculture specifically in rice was discussed by Mr. Vladimir B. Caliguiran, Information Officer II of ATI-RTC 02.

Furthermore, other topics were Rice Tariffication Law and RCEF Program discussed by Mr. Salvador; Basic financial literacy and farm planning and budgeting shared by Ms. Mayflor R. Macmac; Principles of Adult Learning presented by Mr. Arlene G. Ong; Communication and Presentation Skills elaborated by Ms. Francisca Yuro; and Palayamanan and Biomass Recycling explained by Cupido C. Sabatin and Jerome Angel.

Aside from the lecture and discussion, hands-on activities on Agro-Ecosystem Analysis (AESAs), Rice Machinery Operations and field rouging on the seed production were experienced by the participants. For benchmarking, the participants visited the Faraon Integrated Farm, an RCEF Learning Site and Farm School owned by Mr. Mark Anthony Faraon. During the visit,

Faraon shared his experiences and journey on how he established his own farm school and implements RCEF Farmers' Field School.

Mr. Rey Ashley V. Hernandez of RAMIs Integrated Farm said: *“It was really an interesting training that fully met my expectations. The trainers had an excellent ability to communicate, the training was very useful with a lot of tips and good suggestions. The training was delivered with professionalism, knowledge and expertise. It was very interactive, practical and helpful, and entertaining too, enabling me to achieve my learning objectives. I was impressed by the skills and knowledge of the resource speakers and also the training management for the understanding and patience. It's a great privilege to attend training like this for it will be very helpful in my daily work; most especially if we conduct FFS in the farm. To all resource speakers, thank you for sharing your knowledge and experiences with us. Throughout this training it has been really helpful and inspiring, it combines very high levels of professionalism with a friendly and relaxed atmosphere.”*

With the strong partnership of DA-RFO 02, BPI-NSQCS, DA-RCPC and ATI-RTC 02, the training was successfully implemented.

■ **BSOrpilla**

## SOA-SRA BACK...

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...Dr. Roberto C. Busania of DA-RFO 2 and the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Dr. William D. Dar.

As Secretary Dar said, *“the SOA-SRA aims more to our dear farmers and show to everyone the latest innovation and technologies toward modernization that will greatly contribute to the Department of Agriculture with its goal of Masaganang Ani at Mataas na Kita para sa buong bansa. This program will facilitate the massive and sustain education of smallholder farmers of Smart Rice Agriculture through radio. We look forward to building linkages with knowledge, technology, and other support providers of the rice industry. Enlighten the listeners' awareness and mobilize strong support and involvement of rural population in agriculture programs.”*

*Also, we hope to engage government agencies, local government units, civil society organizations, and private sector in the national rice program. May this SOA-SRA serve as feedback mechanism system and venue of dialogue among the rice industry stakeholders.”*

After which, the SOA-SRA was formally launched through a Memorandum of Agreement between the partner agencies and LGUs signed as a symbol of commitment towards the successful conduct of the SOA-SRA in the region. The MOA was presented and the signing was facilitated by Mr. Hector U. Tabun, Chief of the Regional Agriculture and Fisheries Information Section of DA-RFO 2. The activity was participated by partner agencies from DA-RFO 2, ATI-RTC 2,

PhilRice-Isabela, DA-Experiment Station of Nueva Vizcaya and Quirino, Provincial and Municipal Agriculturists and SOA Coordinators from the provinces of Nueva Vizcaya and Quirino giving their full support in the implementation of SOA-SRA with the pledge of commitment in promoting awareness and imparting knowledge on smart rice technologies to farmers to help them achieve Masaganang Ani, Mataas na Kita as envisioned by the DA.

The launching was followed through the first airing on May 26, 2022 and is expected to culminate on October 2022.

■ **FCYuro**



## *digital farmer in the mak*

**A**ndres Agustin was all smiles when we arrived at his farm at Alfonso Castañeda, Nueva Vizcaya. Upon entering his farm, we immediately saw the crops that he planted which are due to be sold in the coming months.

A farmer for 40 years, Andres spent most of his time cultivating the land that he owns into a successful and profitable farm. While he started from applying traditional farming practices, his son, who was a Bachelor in Electronics and Communications Engineering graduate but share the same interests as him in farming, assisted him in transforming his farming techniques digitally. He gradually learns to become a digital farmer.

## A photographer-turned-farmer

Prior to becoming a full-time farmer, Andres was a photographer. Andres, or nicknamed as “Andie”, was born and raised in Gabaldon, Nueva Ecija.

His passion for photography, that started at age 17, brought him to Alfonso Castañeda and became part of the National Irrigation Administration’s project in the area. He spent eight years as a photographer who takes photos for the project.

Fond of reading agriculture magazines and newsletters, he would read success stories of farmers on how they succeeded in farming. This motivated him to venture also in farming and awaken a dream to be one of the many who were featured in newsletters and magazines.

“Nakitak nga napintas ti future na [ti agrikultura],” he said. (The future of agriculture is bright.)

Raised by a police officer and a housewife, Andie started his journey as a farmer with no prior experience in farming but has his passion in agriculture. At 30, he left his high-paying job and used the money that he saved to buy agricultural land. He decided to settle in Alfonso Castañeda. Then for the next 40 years, he learned to become a farmer.

Andie has been managing over 20 hectares of agricultural land now.

## A digital farmer in-the-making

Starting from scratch was not an easy job for Andie. With nothing to support his family of seven but the farm, he had to make it work.

He started cultivating the farm and planted crops such as palay, hybrid corn, squash, beans, and eggplant as first crops. Today, he plants various varieties of Sili, dwarf Coconut, and Calamansi trees which are in demand in the market. He applied what he knew about farming. Over a period of time, the farm expanded and improved into a nine-hectare farm area.

However, he recognized that what he knew was not enough. He must learn more. Hence, Zaldy, one of his sons, assisted him. Zaldy introduced him to various apps and websites that he may visit to research about modern farming practices.

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► SHAYE C. FONTANILLA

As he is now living in the digital age, 69-year-old Andie matched the pace of the advancement of technology; particularly in farming using a smartphone, and a smart and open mind.

“Agkitkita kami diay Google ken Youtube. Idi adda panggatangen [ti materyales], tuladen min [diay practice ken technology],” he shared. (We researched through Google and Youtube. When we have enough fund to buy materials, we adapt the practice and technology.)

Through the articles and videos that he saw, he capacitated himself to adapt modern farming. Andie started his own drip irrigation system which has been running for one and a half years already, and started organic farming practice. By applying the drip irrigation system in the farm, Andie saved 50% or over Php600 from the labor expenses in hiring four people to irrigate the crops for just a day. Through this, he saved his time, effort and money.

With the knowledge he acquired through the digital world, Andie is becoming one of the digital farmers. His inclination to digital farming is in line with the objective of the Digital Farmers Program by the Agricultural Training Institute-Regional Training Center 02 (ATI-RTC 02), in partnership with Smart Communications, Inc. It conducts a training which aims to draw farmers into digital farming and help fellows like Andie who has interest in the benefits of digital farming.



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in agric



Drip Irrigation System at Andie's Farm.

“Agsaludsud ken Google nu awan amruk, agrely nak idiy tatta,” Andres said, pertaining to the widely used search engine in the internet.

He uses his smartphone in researching. (I will ask Google when I don't know something, then I will rely on its search results.)

## A farmer to a farmer-trainer

Although Andie's farm has been doing well so far, he knew that he needs formal training to further develop his farm. Given the opportunity to be linked with the Agricultural Training Institute, he did not let it pass. He applied for the certification of his farm to become a Learning Site for Agriculture (LSA) during this time, and would become the first LSA to be ever certified in their locality. Consequently, this opened another door for Andie.





*the future  
culture.*



Alfonso Castañeda is located six hours away from ATI-RTC 02, but this did not falter Andie. He attended the 12-day Training of Trainers on Production of High-Quality Inbred Rice and Seeds, and Farm Mechanization on May 2022. As a result, he became more equipped on inbred rice production.

He wants to use his experiences in the farm and training, and knowledge on digital farming as backbone in the establishment of his learning site which is named Leszach Integrated Farm. He believes that through the learning site, more young and old farmers in their municipality will be trained and be equipped with the same knowledge that he now holds.

Andie may have basically started from scratch in his farming endeavors, but this did not dishearten him to be a better farmer and be on par with the success stories of farmers he read on magazine.

He still has a long way to go as LSA cooperators and a digital farmer in the making, but he will surely excel in it through his dedication and passion in agriculture. Andie is a living testament that by going out of the comfort of traditional farming, one can effectively succeed moving forward through digital farming. ■

# SUCCESS

*starts from*

# FAILURE

► MARSHIA C. SIMEON

**“The more I fail, the more I get stronger,” said Rodolfo Marquez, owner of Marquez Integrated Farm and Learning Center located in Diffun, Quirino. He is one of the innovative Learning Site for Agriculture (LSA) cooperators in region 2. Farming is already a routine for Rodolfo. It was one happy day that someone asked him where does he work and he said, “I work in PNB–Palaging Nasa Bangkag” which means, “always in the field”.**

## The Rise

Rodolfo is a retired government employee working as extension worker for 39 years. Extension work has always been his passion. After his retirement, he decided to develop his farm. With his desire to continue what he is passionate about which is to share knowledge in agriculture endeavor, Rodolfo became more motivated to apply as LSA. Fortunately, in 2018, Rodolfo’s farm was certified as a learning site by the Agricultural Training Institute–Regional Training Center 2. Venturing on diversified farming is what made Rodolfo succeed in his endeavor. Diversified farming has also helped him to adapt to climate change.

“Farming has become my daily exercise,” Rodolfo expressed in an interview.

Being a farmer takes a lot of effort and innovative ideas that will contribute to the success in agricultural farming. This was proven by Rodolfo as a hands-on farmer. He also said that a farmer by theory is different from a farmer in action. To him, a lot of things can be learned and discovered in the field.

“It is important as a farmer to innovate the existing technologies by doing research,” he added.

Being LSA cooperator is challenging for Marquez. Along his way as a cooperator, he encountered difficult questions from farmers which led him to explore, make his own discovery, and also updated his knowledge. He said that truly, learning is a continuous process.

## The Fall

In Diffun, Quirino, according to Rodolfo, corn and rice cropping season is synchronous. Most of the farmers in his area practice mono cropping. This is why, as an LSA cooperator, Rodolfo recommends to practice integrated or diversified farming so that the farmers will learn





to maximize their time, potential and land area. This recommendation is based from Rodolfo's own experience. Before, he also practiced mono cropping. From there, he realized the risks especially when there is calamity. In his experience in mono cropping, he had no fall back after his corn production has been damaged.

When Marquez became a learning site cooperator, he practiced diversified farming wherein he integrated his corn and rice production with companion crop such as banana which he first tried to plant. He chose banana because it can easily grow and flourish. However, it can be damaged easily by typhoon and so, he decided to plant fruit trees like coconut, rambutan, lansones and mangosteen. In his two-hectare gently rolling land area, Rodolfo is planning to establish a multi-story landscape of his fruit commodities with banana as its main product.

In 2021, Rodolfo had around 200 heads of ducks. Venturing on duck production was also an opportunity for Rodolfo to make salted eggs and sold it in the local market. In every batch of 50 ducks, Rodolfo can harvest more than 150 eggs. At present, he is planning to expand it. More so, he also tried to endeavor on small ruminants but he failed due to climatic condition.

Nevertheless, it did not stop him from trying again. Meanwhile, he is raising 6 heads of goat for production.

"You cannot avoid failure but the good thing is, I never surrender. If I surrender, I'll lose," Rodolfo said with good hope.

During the surge of COVID-19 pandemic, Rodolfo apprehended the advantage of integrated farming. He learned the value of agricultural farming where food is the most essential need of a person to survive. He was fortunate that during the pandemic, his vegetable production was a success. Rodolfo was able to have superfluous vegetable produce. Fifty percent of his produce go to the local market while the other 50% is for their consumption in which, he also shares with his neighborhood. It is also in those times that he supported a community pantry that became a trend during the pandemic.

He supplied the community pantry with vegetables such as squash and okra. With his own little way, Rodolfo felt fulfilled that he was able to help other people especially in his own community.

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*Success doesn't only count  
how much money you  
earned from something;  
it's the fulfillment of  
helping others that counts.*

-Rodolfo Marquez

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“Success doesn’t only count how much money you earned from something; it’s the fulfillment of helping others that counts.”

## The Revival

Sustaining his farm, Rodolfo never stopped discovering things that will help him improve his farming practices and strategies. Based on his practice before, Marquez used to apply fertilizer in his rice production twice. He tried to side dress his rice, then split the fertilizer application from two to three applications. This practice of Rodolfo in his farm is based on the recommendations of the soil analysis.

To his surprise, the effect of applying fertilizer in his rice production thrice is much better compared to applying it twice. In his own analysis as a veteran farmer, applying fertilizer thrice can minimize the infestation of pests on rice. Rodolfo even likened humans to rice. If humans are fed twice, tendency is, they will be overfed for a while then eventually get hungry. In his observation, the same situation will happen to rice.

Although, fertilizer application for three times would cost him much for labor, he testified that the labor cost paid-off because his yield increased.

“Ang point ko sa pag-apply ng fertilizer ng tatlong beses, yung efficiency ng abono ay mas effective dahil nasusustain niya ito. Parang kumain siya ng tatlong beses sa isang araw. Hindi tulad kung dalawang beses lang ang application lalo na sa top dressing, saka side dressing, eh yung nitrogen madaling mawala,” Rodolfo supposed.

With Rodolfo’s curiosity and eagerness to discover new practice, he was able to share it with other farmers. Driven as extension worker, Rodolfo stressed that introducing package of technologies to farmers is crucial. He cited fertilizer application as an example. Even if the fertilizer that a farmer applied is complete if the land preparation is a failure, definitely, corn or even rice production will fail. He then highlighted that a better result starts from a good foundation.

“Dapat package talaga. Yun ang palagi kong sinasabi. Hindi pwedeng isa lang ang pagbuhusan mo. Kagaya ng sinasabi ko, kahit kumpleto yung abono na nilagay mo kung hindi maganda ang land preparation mo, yung fertilizer efficiency, mababa. Kaya sayang lang yung pera lalo na mahal na ngayon ang abono.”

Alfredo Agapito, resident of Zamora, Quirino is just one of the farmers who adopted the technology of Marquez. He has been farming for 30 years now. Before, his habitual

application of fertilizer is twice only. When he attended the Farmers Field School at Marquez Integrated Farm and Learning Center, he learned about the staggered fertilizer application. Alfredo was never hesitant to try it in his rice production because he has seen improvement from Rodolfo’s yield. In fact, he immediately practiced it in his almost four-hectare rice production. In the recent cropping season, Alfredo’s harvest has increased from 10 to 15 percent. Also, in his observation upon applying fertilizer thrice, there were only few undeveloped rice grains compared before when he applied twice. Aside from staggered fertilizer application, Alfredo also learned about the good practices of Rodolfo to include weed and water management.

As an extension worker and a farmer, Marquez also showed his support to farmers saying, “Kahit among pananim, yung package of technology ang dapat na mai-apply para makuha natin yung potential yield at mai-angat natin ang corn at rice production na hindi lugi ang mga magsasaka. Importante na kahit papaano, kumikita tayo sa ating endeavor.” Rodolfo expressed his gratitude to the Agricultural Training Institute-Regional Training Center 2 as its partner in delivering extension services.

“Very timely na mayroon tayong endeavor na ganito dahil at least yung mga extension services ay naipapaabot na natin ng malapitan sa mga tao at walang katapusan na extension service,” he uttered.

“In my own simple way, I am trying my best to help our extension workers reach out to more farmers,” these were the words of compassion of Rodolfo Marquez as a show of support to the extension workers recognizing their efforts. He is also challenging his fellow farmers to share their inputs in the existing technologies and try to discover more to achieve, ‘Masaganang Ani, Mataas na Kita’.

Marquez is always open to provide technical assistance to his fellow farmers. And to those farmers who are willing to learn from Rodolfo, he is always willing to make himself available at the “PNB-Palaging Nasa Bangkag”. He then would like to advise the farmers, “never be afraid to fail because failure will lead you to success.” ■

# A Heart for

▶ MAICAH CHRISHAINE N. CONSTANTINO

# AGRI

Like other dreamers of agriculture business, Jehanel Soriano does not hesitate to pursue her goal: to be a successful agri-preneur. Although there is no overnight success, Jehanel is motivated.

Her first step towards farming was when she took Bachelors' Degree in Agribusiness at Central Luzon State University. Upon finishing college, she applied to DA-CVRC at Ilagan City, Isabela. Working in the agriculture sector made Jehanel appreciate farmers as essential food producers who are at the forefront of agriculture. This made her set aside her corporate career to experience the life of a full-time farmer and agri-preneur. She knew that her heart was set for agriculture.

Before finally deciding to change the course of her life at the age of 24, she was already in farm business. Jehanel manages an agriculture supply shop. However, her farm business journey formally started when she became a farm owner. Located at San Juan, Ilagan City, Isabela, Jehanel built JESLA Integrated Farm.

## A stepping stone to farm life

With the help of the Local Government Unit – City Agriculture Office of Ilagan City, Agricultural Training Institute – Regional Training Center II (ATI-RTC 02), and Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), her farm is a certified farm school under Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF).

The JESLA Integrated Farm offers Farmers' Field School on Production of High-Quality Inbred Rice, Seed Certification, and Farm Mechanization to at least 300 farmers now. This prepares farmers to adapt modern rice farming technologies, and elevates their knowledge and skills.

Established in 2020, the one-hectare farm offers various commodities such as rice, poultry (chicken and fish), livestock, high-value crops, among others.



Also, their farm offers services like fishing, egg-picking, and technical assistance on organic agriculture. Jehanel came up with various projects to improve the farm.

To acquire more knowledge and enhance her skills, Jehanel untiringly attended seminars and trainings of ATI-RTC 02 and other partner agencies. She believes that learning is a continuous process which anyone must keep on for additional knowledge and acquire skills to be better or even best.

“Right now, I’m proud to say that I’m a farmer who is always willing to learn and experience more about farming to teach the young and aspiring farmers for our future generation,” she mentioned.

### A young agri-prenuership enthusiast

Aside from managing a farm school, Jehanel ventured into egg layer production. As soon as this took off, she decided to devote her time to farm business. Amidst the surge of COVID-19 in 2020, she grew her egg business; gaining more clients as time passed by.

She sells fresh white and brown eggs in trays offering farm gate price to distributors, wholesalers, resellers, retailers, and consumers. She ensures not any single egg is wasted. She used broken eggs in making Leche flan. She also sells cull chickens. Jehanel was gradually succeeding in the agri-business world.

When she sought help from the Department of Agriculture, she was given financial assistance for the expansion of their layer production through Agri-Negosyo Loan Program (ANYO).

“Bilang isang agri-preneur, napakarami kong pangarap na gawin pero mahirap talagang simulan kapag wala kang kapital. Kaya sobrang nagpapasalamat ako sa DA dahil nabigyan ako ng oportunidad na palaguin pa ang layer production business ko sa pamamagitan ng kanilang mga programa na ino-offer na nakakatulong sa mga farmers na katulad ko,” she shared. To grow her client reach,

Jehanel utilizes social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Youtube. Their daily posts in Facebook helped increase their income on layer production and promote the farm.

“Napakalaking tulong ng pagpo-post ko sa social media o pagbebenta through online dahil mas dumami ang aming mga clients at mga sinusuplayan ng itlog. Dito ko nakikita na may kagandahan rin ang paggamit ng social media para mas makilala pa ng nakararami ang tulad kong young agri-preneur,” she said.

A graduate of the Training of Trainers on Digital Agriculture Course for RCEF (DAC4RCEF) in October 2021, Jehanel became more equipped in applying digital agriculture in her farm life. She also believes that the training benefits farmers by helping them match the pace with the advancing digital technologies.

Prior to TOT on DAC4RCEF, Jehanel was already an actual creator for the digital world as a vlogger. During the onset of the pandemic, together with her partner Einar de Mesa, they started a YouTube channel (@TeamJenarOfficial). Here, they post their vlogs about farming and agri-business. She uses this opportunity to promote her business and to encourage people to venture in agriculture.

### An empowered woman-farmer and agri-preneur

As a farm-owner and a facilitator, educating the farmers with the needed knowledge is one of her desires. It is challenging especially when she encounters farmers with different attitudes, beliefs, and ages. However, this made her more motivated to stick to her purpose; to empower farmers in achieving better yield and higher income.

A mother of her newborn Isabelle which is now one of her motivations, Jehanel had another milestone. She was awarded with the ‘Go Negosyo Inspiring Filipina Entrepreneur for 2022’ grant with “Most Promising Microenterprise”

of Kapatid Mentor Program (KAMMP)”. This was given during the conduct of Go Negosyo Women 2022 Entrepreneurship Summit on March 11, 2022 along with other 17 Outstanding Women. National level acknowledgement as a strong-woman farmer and entrepreneur was momentous for Jehanel.

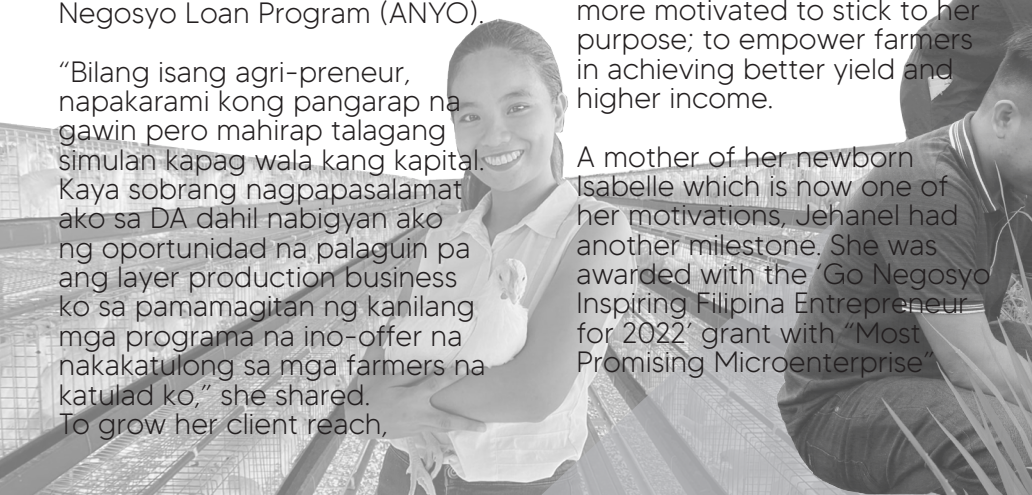
“Ipagpatuloy lang po ninyo ang mga nasimulan niyo, mahirap pero dapat kakayanan palagi lalo na kung passion mo ang farming. At dapat maging explorer tayo, huwag po tayong mag-stick sa iisang commodity like rice, dapat lahat i-enjoy nating pag-aralan at mag-engage tayo in different agriculture field”, she advised her fellow farmers and agri-preneur.

Started from empowering one’s self, Jehanel continues helping her fellow farmers to improve their farm situations. Through the heart that beats for agriculture, she aims to contribute in achieving sustainable agriculture and the best quality of life for people from all walks of life. ■



...DAPAT LAHAT I-ENJOY NATING PAG-ARALAN AT MAG-ENGAGE TAYO IN DIFFERENT AGRICULTURE FIELD.

-Jehanel Soriano





## Vermicomposting

work with worms

The process of converting biodegradable farm wastes and other household wastes into compost (organic fertilizer) through the action of earthworms.

### Importance

1. Enrich soils with organic matter which comes from biodegradable materials
2. Excellent soil enhancer and bioactive fertilizer for organic farming

### Start your own Vermicompost at home because it's easy!

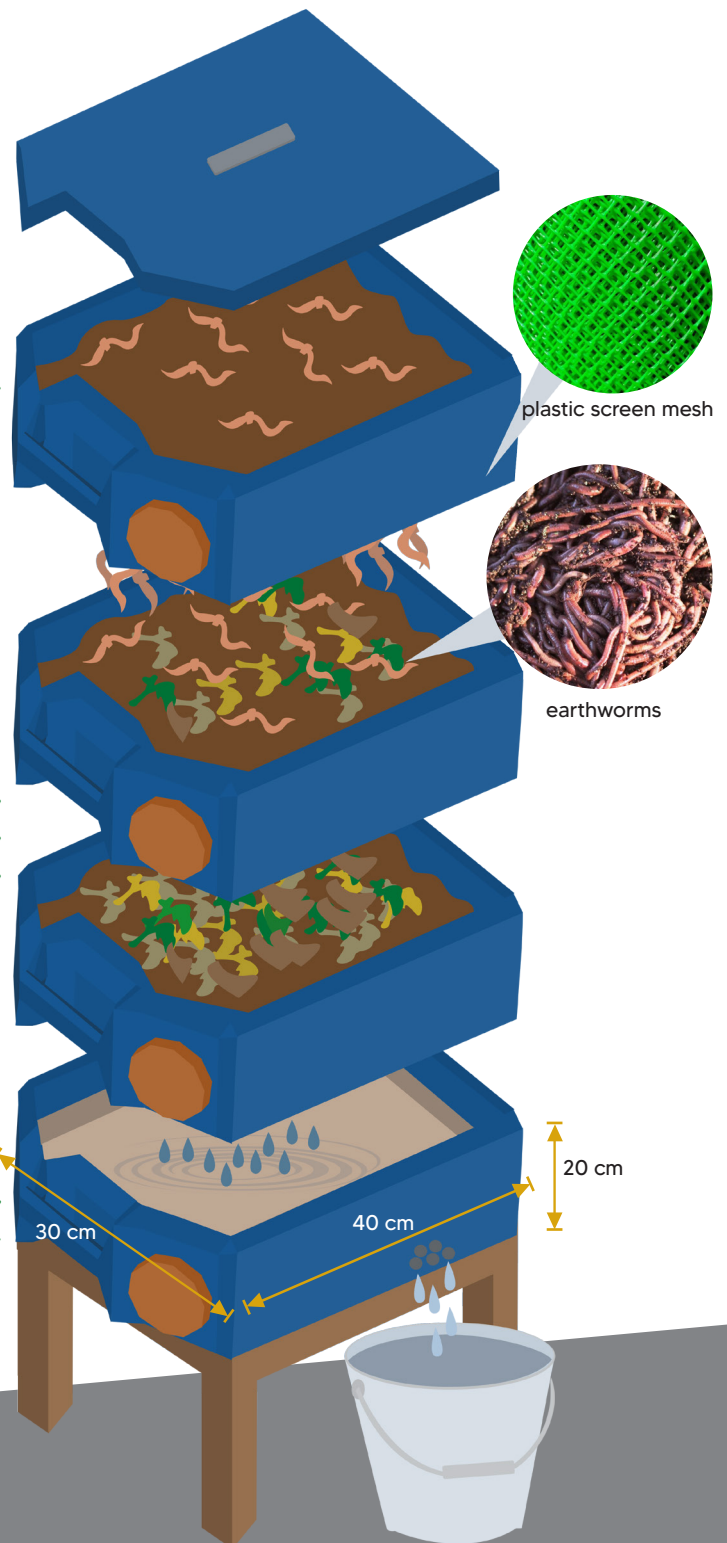
1. Prepare/obtain a bin
2. Gather and prepare materials like farm, garden, or kitchen wastes. Put in the bin.
3. Add water in the materials that has less than 60% moisture depending on the dryness of the material
4. Stock the worms. One kilogram of earthworms (about 1,000 pieces) for every 1m sq. of vermibed that contains 100-200 kilograms of materials/substrates.
5. Maintain the bin with least 60% moisture level and protect the earthworms from its predators.
6. Harvest the vermicompost after 30-45 days.
7. Properly pack and store the vermicompost.

*Cover*

*Worm casting (compost)*

*active areas with scraps and worms*

*vermi wash collection*



# GAD Corner

Gender and Development

## 2022 First Semester Highlights

### Happy National Women's Month! >>>>>

ATI-RTC 02 staff members raised their placards containing Sustainable Development Goal statements as a sign of joining the National Women's Month celebration (NWMC) program kick off which were conducted by respective government agencies in the whole country simultaneously on February 28, 2022.

"I believe we celebrate women's month in recognition of being empowered," said Dr. Claris M. Alaska, OIC-Assistant Center Director, referring to the women staff of the center during her support speech.

Engr. Fhrea Guzman and Jei-ar Limos also stated their support statements to all women.

Meanwhile, ATI-RTC 02 Center Director Imelda M. Guillermo expressed her delight in the conduct of the celebration and shared the strengths of being a woman during her opening remarks.

This year marks the end of the 6-year theme of NWMC which is "We Make Change Work for Women", and the onset of the sub-theme: "Agenda ng Kababihan, Tungo sa Kaunlaran."





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