

BUSLO

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COVER STORY

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the DAIRY LIFE of ALEX

FINDING THE NICHE IN CARABAO DAIRY FARMING

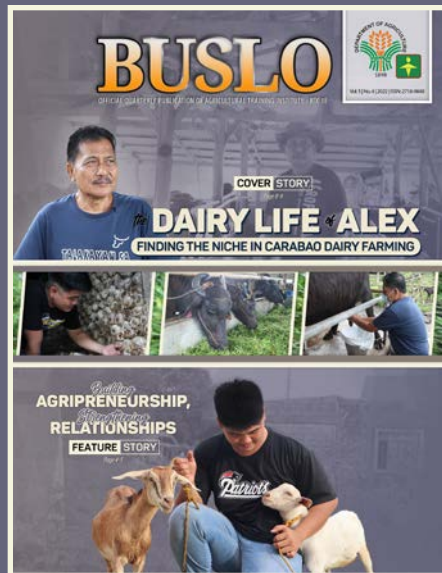


Building AGRIpreneURSHIP, Strengthening RELATIONSHIPS

FEATURE STORY

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ABOUT THE COVER

"Nasubukan ko ng mag-alaga ng baka at kambing, pero hininto ko. Puro gatasang kalabaw nalang ang alaga namin dahil nakita ko na mas higit na ang pakinabang ko sa gatasang kalabaw," Alejandro Leoncio, a farmer in San Miguel, Bulacan quipped.

Carabao are often used to plow fields, move and carry heavy objects and even transport individuals. They are also a major source of milk in provincial areas. Thus, Alex tried to pursue carabao farming and found a niche in this venture.

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About BUSLO: Buslo symbolizes the preservation of bountiful harvest in Central Luzon being the rice granary and vegetable basket of the Philippines. Like the humble vessel present in every Filipino, the publication aims to store and bring relevant and timely news to every farmer, fisherfolk and extension workers in the region.



Farmers from Sta. Cruz, Zambales join the face-to-face graduation ceremony for SOA-RCEF in Botolan

ATI-CL holds f2f graduation for SOA-RCEF

The Agricultural Training Institute in Central Luzon conferred 750 farmers as graduates of IN SA INBRED: School-on-the-Air on Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (SOA-RCEF) in its face-to-face graduation held on November 15, 2022, at Bololan Peoples' Plaza, Botolan, Zambales.

The SOA-RCEF aired 16 episodes from August 14 to October 24, 2022, through different radio stations: *Serbisyong Radyo Potog* 101.5FM, *Radyo Natin Iba* 105.7FM, and *Radyo Bandera* – Olongapo 107.1FM.

"I would like to thank ATI for making this in-person graduation happens. It wouldn't be possible if not for them. Also, I would like to recognize the efforts of

our farmers in Zambales who tirelessly listened to the radio just to learn new technologies in rice farming. I hope that this SOA tickles your minds as we face environmental changes," said Crisostomo Rabaca, OIC-Provincial Agriculturist of Zambales.

The said SOA-RCEF is in partnership with the OPA-Zambales, Municipal Agriculture Offices of Zambales, and Local Government Units of Zambales.

Moreover, SOA-RCEF aimed to teach farmers about the benefits of the Rice Tariffication Law, the salient features of RCEF, and innovative rice farming practices and technologies based on the PalayCheck System.

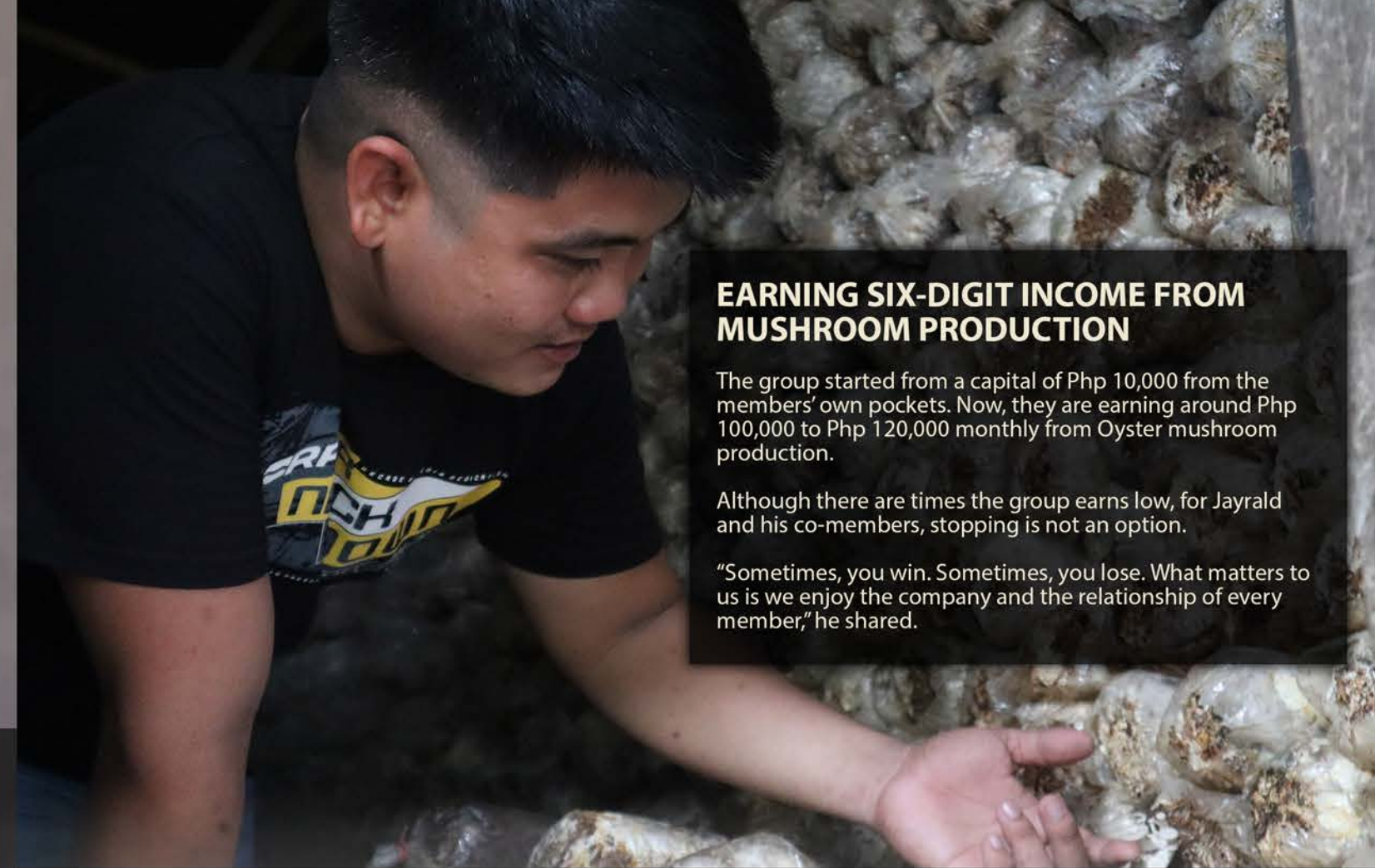
"I am glad that I am part of this activity. Thank you ATI for bringing SOA to Zambales. I was able to jot down things I needed to do on my farm, and I will apply all the lessons I've learned for possible higher yield potential," message of Arnel M. Fababier, one of the topnotchers of SOA-RCEF.

The pool of resource persons from ATI included Mr. Aeron P. Bermudez, Ms. Reinalyn C. Gulen, Ms. Joan F. Parayno, Mr. Jayson S. Baldoz, and Ms. Mary Joyce B. Rivero. Meanwhile, Mr. John Led Joaquin hosted all the SOA episodes.

Further, the SOA-RCEF graduation is the first face-to-face event of ATI-CL that caters more than hundreds of farmers since the COVID outbreak in 2020. **JLGJoaquin**

Building AGRIPRENEURSHIP, Strengthening RELATIONSHIPS

By: Prince Macky Marcos



EARNING SIX-DIGIT INCOME FROM MUSHROOM PRODUCTION

The group started from a capital of Php 10,000 from the members' own pockets. Now, they are earning around Php 100,000 to Php 120,000 monthly from Oyster mushroom production.

Although there are times the group earns low, for Jayrald and his co-members, stopping is not an option.

"Sometimes, you win. Sometimes, you lose. What matters to us is we enjoy the company and the relationship of every member," he shared.



GETTING SUPPORT FROM FAMILY AND GOVERNMENT

Jayrald's parents are also proud of him. They did not hesitate in financially supporting his agribusinesses and never doubted his abilities as his father is also a farmer.

Also, the Municipal Agriculture Office of Llanera is supportive of the group, giving them assistance whenever needed.

BUILDING AGRIPRENEURSHIP

In 2019, 19-year-old Jayrald Martin and his friends from Nueva Ecija established a 4-H Club in their local community in Plarider, Llanera to engage in agriculture.

Jayrald became one of the participants of the Provincial Training of the Binhi ng Pag-asa Program (BPP) in the province in 2021. He received a pair of goats but the male one died. He tried his best to keep it alive, took it to veterinarians, and gave the appropriate amount of prescribed medicine. However, the goat did not survive.

Since then, he became cautious about taking care of his livestock. The female goat already produced a kid (which he sold for Php 4,000) and now expecting another offspring next month. He bought 20 Rhode Island chicks from the first goat production income to venture into poultry farming. He is now raising them near his house.

Jayrald's interest in Oyster mushroom production sparked when his friends encouraged him. Realizing he has so much free time, he focused on learning about producing the edible mushroom.

STRENGTHENING RELATIONSHIPS

As a participant in the BPP training, Jayrald shared the learning with his 4-H Club members. He also encouraged them to actively participate in different seminars to benefit their organization.

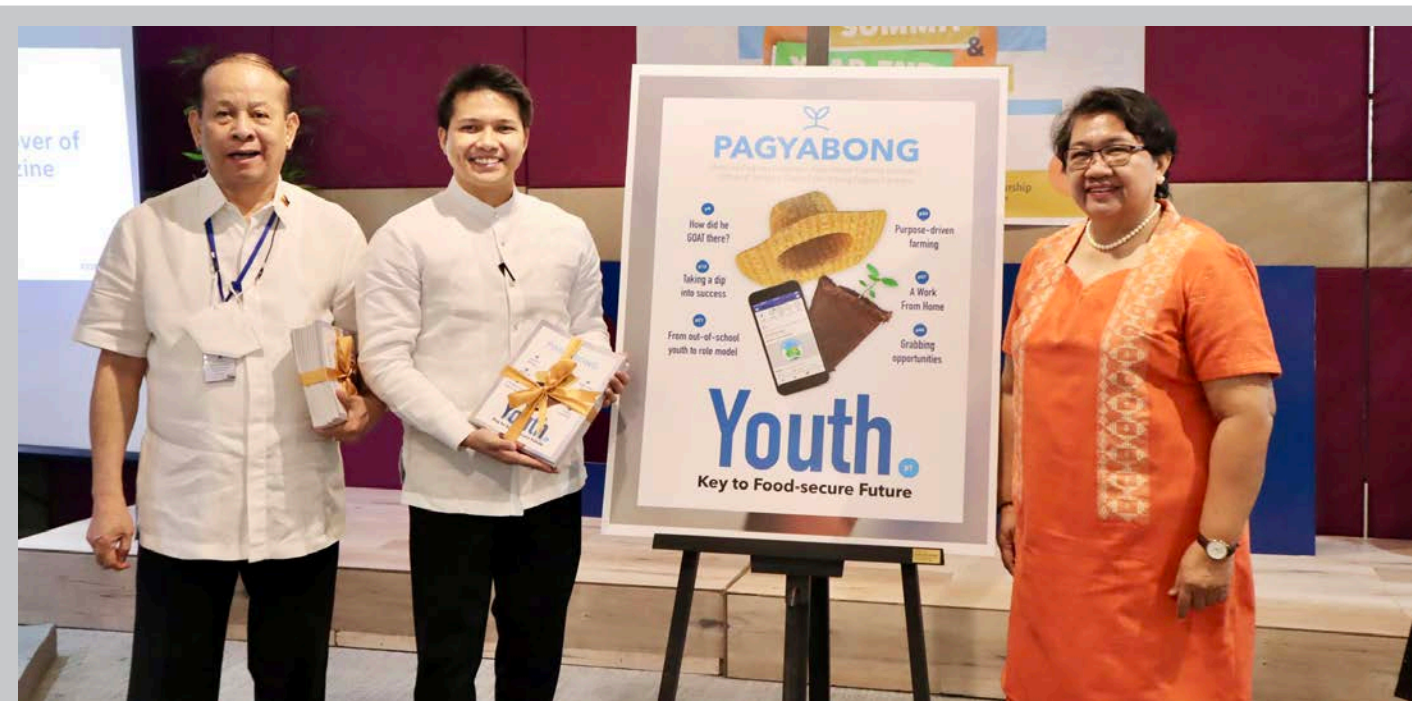
Meanwhile, the group capitalized on each other's abilities to manage agricultural ventures, especially mushroom production. They meet every Monday and Saturday to work on the farm site for a whole day, and each has a specific role in the production process.

Like any other organization, the group had problems that led to disbanding and almost stopping production. As beginners in entrepreneurship, one of the group's main struggles is a poor financial or budgetary system. Fortunately, the group recovered and applied strict management of cash flow by focusing on every detail.

The organization also encountered members who were losing hope for not profiting. Jayrald never stopped encouraging his friends to stay and explained that they will reap what they are sowing now.

Believing in the potential and the opportunities that everything will be worth it, Jayrald made his friends stay. The trust and confidence in the group continuously improved.

"Agriculture is not hard, and at the same time, not easy. But it is a fun thing to do with friends and we feel more productive. Somehow, we inspire our fellow youth in our community who are venturing into agriculture to also create a deep connection with one another," he shared.



Mr. Domingo Panganiban (left), Mr. Brian Poe-Llamanzares (center), and Dir. Remelyn R. Recoter (right) launch the Pagyabong Magazine during the Binhi ng Pag-asa Program Summit

Central Luzon youth join BPP National Summit

The two provinces from Central Luzon (Bataan and Tarlac) sent off the selected participants from its different municipalities to participate in the 3-day Binhi ng Pag-asa (BPP) National Summit and Year-End Assessment on December 19-21, 2022 with a theme "YouthLEADS: Harnessing Youth Leadership

in Entrepreneurship Towards Agricultural Development and Sustainability."

The OIC Director IV of ATI Engr. Remelyn R. Recoter, MNSA, CESO III, delivered her opening remarks and inspired the youth participants emphasizing the

impact of the quotation written on a shirt saying, "I am the future." Meanwhile, Mr. Brian Poe-Llamanzares, Chief of Staff from OSGP and son of Senator Grace Poe, extended his warmest appreciation to the partner agencies for supporting

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ATI-CL bags major awards in IS Achiever's Awards

The Agricultural Training Institute-Central Luzon (ATI-CL) through its Information Services Section (ISS) bagged three (3) major awards in 2022 during the IS Achievers' Awards of the Knowledge Management Updates in Butuan City on December 8, 2022.

The center has been recognized for its most notable accomplishments in the following major fields: (1) Knowledge Products and Services; (2) Digital Farmers Program

(DFP); and (3) Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund-Rice Extension Services Program.

This year, ATI-CL has developed and produced 57 various kinds of Knowledge Products such as corporate materials, technology kits, pamphlets, leaflets, booklets, brochures, and videos. In addition, ATI-CL have registered 16 publications to ISSN/ISBN through the National Library of the Philippines from 2019-2022.

The center has also conducted two (2) batches of DFP to our FITS staff in Aurora and Nueva Ecija. In fact, the FITS staff have rolled out the said program to the farmers in their respective areas. Moreover, an additional seven (7) batches of DFP have been implemented in the Learning Sites for Agriculture across all provinces in Central Luzon. Capping off the program this year was the implementation of the first ever Digital Agriculture Congress

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Coconut farmers in Casiguran, Aurora join the information caravan for the Coconut Farmers and Industry Development Plan

CL Farmers immerse in CFIDP

The farmers in Central Luzon have immersed in the Coconut Farmers and Industry Development Plan (CFIDP) through a series of information caravans in October 2022.

Implemented in seven (7) selected municipalities in the region, the information caravan's goal is to spread awareness among coconut farmers and stakeholders about CFIDP. The schedule is as follows: (1) Casiguran, Aurora – October 4, 2022; (2) Maria Aurora, Aurora – October 7, 2022; (3) Dingalan, Aurora – October 10, 2022; (4) Orani, Bataan – October 13, 2022; (5) Bagac, Bataan – October 18, 2022; (6) San Felipe, Zambales – October 21, 2022; and (7) Botolan, Zambales – October 26, 2022.

"Ako po bilang isang magsasaka ay sa lahat ng programang inilunsad, ito ay napakaperpekto. Nakikita po namin ang lahat ng programa ng gobyerno pero dito sa CFIDP, napakakumpleto po ang mga ahensya na kasama. Ipursigi po natin ang programang dinala sa atin para makamit po natin ang matamis na bunga nito," said Mr. Ernie Juliano, a coconut farmer from Botolan, Zambales.

Mr. Juliano further urged his fellow farmers to strive to nurture their coconut plants because he said that the program will be of big help to the coconut farmers in the country.

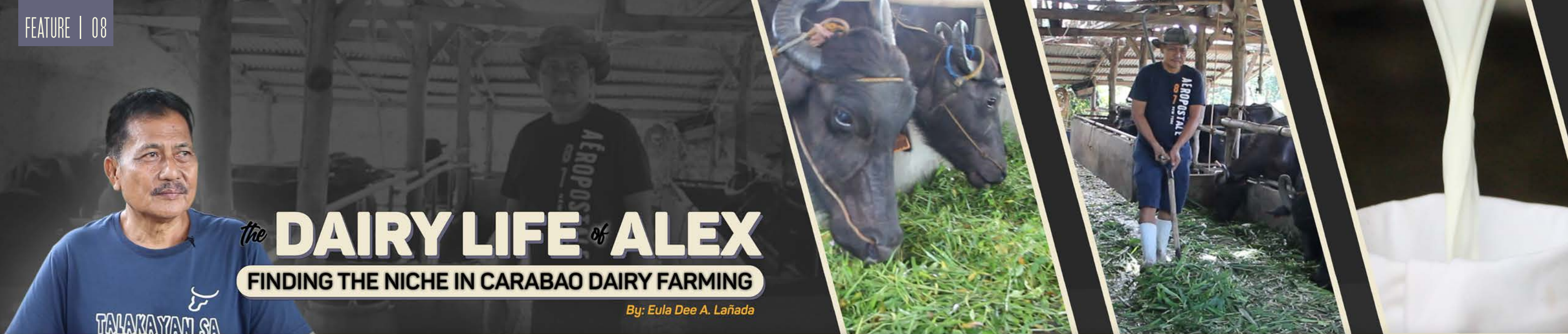
CFIDP aims to benefit 2.5 million coconut farmers and their families through its different program

components. With its whole-of-government approach, several government agencies converged and facilitated the implementation of CFIDP in which the information caravan is part of it.

Mr. Arnulfo Roxas, another coconut farmer from Casiguran, Aurora, quipped that he is very grateful for the project. *"Nasa atin paring mga coconut farmers ang challenge. Ituring nating negosyo ito. Kapag hindi tayo sincere sa ating ginagawa, nagkakaroon tayo ng problema. Nawa ay magkaroon ito ng impact sa kabuhayan ng bawat magsasaka ng niyog. Gusto kong idedicate ang aking farm para maging training facility para makatulong sa mga kapwa magsasaka,"* shared Roxas.

Mr. Roxas also dedicated and

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the DAIRY LIFE of ALEX

FINDING THE NICHE IN CARABAO DAIRY FARMING

By: Eula Dee A. Lañada

For Alejandro Leoncio, a farmer in San Miguel, Bulacan, dairy farming is his family's lifeblood. Among the livestock that he has taken care of, he stuck to carabao farming and discovered the wonders of its milk.

"Nasubukan ko ng mag-alaga ng baka at kambing, pero hininto ko. Puro gatasang kalabaw nalang ang alaga namin dahil nakita ko na mas higit na ang pakinabang ko sa gatasang kalabaw," Alejandro or better known as Alex to his family and friends quipped.

Carabao are often used to plow fields, move and carry heavy objects and even transport individuals. They are also a major source of milk in provincial areas. Thus, Alex tried to pursue carabao farming and found a niche in this venture.

Finding the niche

Built in 1992, the Axis Dairy Farm started with rice, vegetables and mangoes. Its owner, Alejandro Leoncio or Alex, spent six (6) years in Saudi Arabia as an electronics worker before going back to the Philippines to start a farm and electronics business.

With almost three (3) decades of farming experience, Alex became the Chairman of the Vegetable Growers Association in their area. He also represented San Miguel in the provincial Mango Growers Association.

When his mango orchard flourished, it was impossible for him to plant rice and vegetables thus he ventured into carabao raising after research and consultations with other people. Alex only started with 2 or 4 heads of carabao and now, he has 27 heads.

In 2015, he concentrated into dairy farming as he discovered the wonders of the carabao's milk as well as its market. His farm even supplies milk for Red Ribbon, Goldilocks, Robinsons and Dream Shipping.

The success of Axis Dairy Farm

With 6.25 hectares of farm land, Axis Dairy Farm is a home to livestock and poultry (pigs, chicken, duck, rabbit, carabaos); and vegetables. The farm has a pond full of tilapia, catfish and mudfish too.

The farm also boasts of its products such as fresh carabao milk, kesong puti, and pastillas. They even sell lechong native baboy for different occasions as well as grilled tilapia, catfish and mudfish.

He revealed that his exposure to the Department of Agriculture and Agricultural Training Institute paved way to his success in agriculture.

Alex shared that if one wants to venture into carabao farming, he suggests to learn first about the problems to be encountered. *"Kung kayo ay papasok*

sa pag-aalaga ng gatasang kalabaw, aralin muna ang mga problemang kakaharapin," he said. In that sense, one will know how to face the challenges when they encounter one.

He also emphasized the importance of learning about the craft before venturing into it. *"Bago pasukin ang pagkakalabaw, pag-aralan muna. Hindi yung sasabayin ang pag-aaral at pagnenegosyo. Dapat unahin ang pag-aaral,"* he quipped.

Pieces of advice to fellow farmers

Alex encourages other budding farmers or new farm owners to learn the craft before venturing into it. *"Dapat ang isang may-ari ng farm, siya muna ang mag-aral. Kung aalis man ang tauhan nya, pwede nyang turuan ang bago nyang farm workers. Ito rin ay isang paraan para hindi siya maloko at masayang ang investment nya,"* the farm owner quipped.

Also, as a piece of advice to his fellow overseas Filipino worker (OFW) who are interest in farming, he said that they have to research first and attend seminars and not just rely on farm workers. He suggested that they need to become hands-on in the farm.

The farm owner shared the importance of starting small before venturing into a bigger scale after mastering the craft just like any other field. *"Dapat may passion talaga sila,"* Alex added.

For the youth, Alex prods them to ask questions and don't just rely on videos found in the internet. He strongly recommends them to attend seminars to learn their trade secrets not found on videos and other platforms. *"Huwag magrely sa napapanood sa Youtube, kasi kulang 'yun. Dapat mag-attend ng seminars kasi may mga sekreto yang mga farmers na pwede nilang i-share doon. At huwag kayong mahihiyang magtanong,"* Alex said.

Quenching the thirst

Even with his three (3) decades of farm experience, Alex still searches for new knowledge to improve his farm. To know more about the latest technologies and trade secrets, he visits other farms and talk to other farmers.

"Sa 10 months, halos 80% ng puhunan ay naibalik na. 'Yung lahat ng gatas ng pinagbilhan at 'yung anak ng kalabaw, bawing bawi na," Alex reveals as he ensures farmers and interested individuals that there is success in carabao dairy farming.

Based on his experience, Alex recommends carabao dairy farming to anyone. He has experienced taking care of other livestock but he stuck with carabao and continued to hone his skills in his craft. He said that his farm is open to anyone who wants additional information or knowledge on carabao dairy farming.



Dir. Remelyn R. Recoter, ATI National Director, delivers the keynote message for the 1st Digital Agriculture Congress and TGP Summit

1st Digital Agri Congress, TGP summit bring latest digital applications closer to farmers, FITS staff

With its goal to introduce the latest digital applications to farmers and extension workers, the Agricultural Training Institute-Central Luzon (ATI-CL) spearheaded the 1st Digital Agriculture Congress and Techno Gabay Program (TGP) Summit in Angeles City, Pampanga with more than 150 participants on December 6-7, 2022.

With the theme “Digitalization of Agriculture, Shaping Central Luzon’s Digital Future,” the participants, which consisted of Learning Site for Agriculture Cooperators and TGP implementers, joined the 2-day event emphasizing the role of digitalization in the agriculture sector.

The event covered plenary sessions on different topics on digitalization of agriculture; awards night; and sharing of best practices among FITS Centers and LSA FITS Kiosks.

Mr. Mark Anthony Subido of SGS Philippines, Inc. discussed a topic under the precision agriculture technology – Precision Gateway: The Turn Key Application. In addition, Mr. Willy C. Odiza of Grains Innovation & Solutions Co., Inc. introduced the DJI Agricultural Drone Sprayer Agras +30 to be used in the fertilizer application in the farms. Meanwhile, Ms. Ma. Elena P. Van Tooren of East-West Seed Foundation explained the

Digital Tools for the Modern Farmer to the participants. Another resource person is Ms. Kristine G. Magadia from Smart & PLDT who discussed the Digital Farmers Program, which is a collaboration between Smart and ATI. Moreover, Mr. John Carlo Landayan, a student from Central Luzon State University, shared the AI Crop Prediction Fertilizer Recommendation System. Further, Mr. Elvin Laceda of RiceUP Farmers, Inc. tackled the SAKAHON, which is a marketing application for farmers.

“Imagine sa age ko na ito as a senior citizen with my long experience eh may natutunan pa ako through the Digital Agriculture Congress and Digital Farmers Program. Napakaganda ng programang ito at napakarami po naming natutunan especially with SAKAHON na naging tulay itong congress para magkaroon kami ng partnership sa kanila,” said Ms. Imelda Inieto, an LSA Cooperator and one of the participants of the event.

Part of the congress is the Awards Night wherein the TGP pioneers and practitioners were recognized. The pioneers recognized were: Dr. Yolanda Guillermo of Tarlac Agricultural University; Dr. Jovita B. Agliam of OPA-Nueva Ecija; Ms. Janet L. Saturno of CLSU; Mr. Crisostomo Rabaca of OPA-Zambales;

Ms. Leah R. Lombres of OPA-Aurora; Ms. Rachele Liberato of CLSU-CLAARRDEC; and Dr. Fe L. Porciuncula of CLSU.

Further, the outstanding Farmers Information and Technology Services (FITS) Centers for selected provinces were also proclaimed: FITS Maria Aurora for Aurora; FITS Anao for Tarlac; FITS Castillejos for Zambales and FITS Sto. Domingo for Nueva Ecija.

ATI-CL also awarded the Tarlac Agricultural University (TAU) as the best TGP implementer in Central Luzon. TAU has been in-charge of the implementation of the said modality even when the program was turned over to the provincial offices thus their activities and other projects within the province were sustained through their leadership and guidance.

The entries of the Learning Sites for Agriculture for the contests (vlogging, TikTok Challenge, smartphone photography, Canva poster making, and ATI reels) were also shown during the awards night. Following the showcase was the awarding of the winners for the said contests.

During the second day, Ms. Emelita Flores, FITS Manager of Sto. Domingo, Nueva Ecija, shared their best practices to the participants for them to pick-up activities that can be replicated to their respective offices. Following Ms. Flores were Mr. Alvin Butay of FITS Anao, Tarlac; and Ms. Janice Sardo of FITS Castillejos, Zambales, who also shared their best practices as well as other activities and projects to sustain the TGP in their respective areas.

“Hindi lamang opportunity ang binigay kundi pati benchmark para mas mapaunlad pa ang FITS Centers ng ating bayan. Na-appreciate ko po yung mga napiling topics dahil napakarelevant and timely ng mga naituro dito sa event na ito,” said Mr. Ceff Jr Basa, one of the participants and TGP coordinator of Bulacan.

Ms. Friantina Resplandor of Myriad Farms in Nueva Ecija and Mr. Rafael Pagaling of Zennor Hydroponics Farm in Zambales also showcased their best practices and activities to the participants as LSA FITS Kiosks. They served as the models for other LSAs to come LSA FITS Kiosks in the future.

During the closing program, ATI-CL turned over the ICT equipment for the enhanced FITS Centers of the year. The following FITS Centers were the recipients of the said enhancement: (1) FITS Dinalungan, Aurora; FITS OPA-Bataan; (2) FITS San Isidro, Nueva Ecija; (3) FITS Magalang, Pampanga; (4) FITS Palauig, Zambales; and FITS OPA-Bulacan.

In addition, the following LSAs were also granted with equipment for the establishment of LSA FITS Kiosks in their farms: (1) Angel Tolits Integrated Farm; and (2) Merryland Integrated Farm and Training Center, Inc.

“Napag-usapan po namin last time ng aming mga farmers ang digitalization in agriculture, at ang activity na ito ay parang
continued on page 13...



Agras T30, A New Digital Flagship for Agriculture



ATI-CL bags major... *from page 7...*

on December 5-6, 2022 among 50 LSA cooperators and 100 FITS staff. We have invited several experts to share their latest digital applications and technologies in the field of agriculture.

Further, a total of 30 Barangay FITS kiosks has been established in the region under RCEF-RESP. Also, five (5) FITS centers have been launched under the said program. For the implementation of SOA-RCEF, a

total of 764 graduates finished the program in Zambales. Lastly, a magazine solely dedicated to RCEF was also published every semester covering the activities of the program. **EDALAñada**

Central Luzon youth... *from page 6...*

the program. Also present in the program was Department of Agriculture Senior Undersecretary Domingo F. Panganiban who delivered his message of support to the youth participants.

One of the highlights of the program was the Launching and Turnover of Pagyabong Magazine, wherein the 2 of the writers were from the ATI-RTC III, Ms. Johanna Sta Cruz, PMO I and Mr. Prince Macky Marcos, PMO I.

Moreover, one of the participants from the BPP Bataan, Mr. Michael Grande, Provincial 4-H Club President, was interviewed to highlight his story after the implementation of the program.

In addition, the PMOs from the OSGP, Mr. Marcos and Mr. Edrian Bautista, PMO I, discussed the SPIN (Situation, Problem, Implication and Needs) identified during the implementation of the program.

Afterwards, Mr. Jyleazar F. Dela Rosa, Chief of Political Affairs- OSGP, discussed the topic on Leadership: How Youth Thrive in the Agriculture Sector. Furthermore, Mr. Rafael L. Pagaling, INJAP SIA Outstanding Young Entrepreneur for Agriculture Sector, discussed the topic on Agripreneurship: A Blueprint to Success. Lastly, Ms. Nemielyn P. Pangilinan, OIC- Chief, PAD, discussed the topic on Sustainability: Opportunities for the Youth through various government interventions.

Also, for the BPP Year-end Assessment, the accomplishment report for the 8 Provinces were discussed. Ms. Sta Cruz, emphasized the highlights, challenges encountered during the implementation of the program and the recommendations in the Province of Bataan and Tarlac.

The summit and assessment were attended by the Center Directors, BPP Focal, Provincial Coordinators, PMOs, NTOTs, and selected participants from the eight provinces, Bataan, Tarlac, Batangas, Camarines Norte, Iloilo, Zamboanga Sibugay, Oriental Mindoro and North Cotabato. **JBStaCruz**

CL Farmers immerse... *from page 7...*

offered his farm as a training facility to help his fellow farmers succeed.

and their Practical Application on Coconut Processing, Production, and Distribution; and 7. Support Services.

CFIDP is comprised of various components to be realized by the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) and its partner agencies: 1. Social Protection; 2. Coconut Farmers Organization and Development; 3. Hybridization; 4. Community-based Farm Enterprise Development: Farm Rehabilitation and Improvement; 5. Integrated Coconut Processing and Downstream Products; 6. Innovative Research Projects

Together with PCA and Agricultural Training Institute (ATI), the following government agencies are involved in the implementation of the program: Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation (PCIC), PhilHealth, Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Cooperative Development Authority (CDA), Department of Science and Technology-PCAARRD (DOST-PCAARRD), Bureau of Animal

Industry (BAI), National Dairy Authority (NDA), Department of Agriculture-HVCDP, Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP), Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP), Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization (PHilMech), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), and Department of Trade and Industry (DTI).

Following the implementation this year, another batch of information caravans on CFIDP will be conducted in Central Luzon next year. **EDALAñada**



Representatives of five (5) barangays in Camiling, Tarlac receive ICT equipment for the establishment of RCEF Barangay FITS kiosks

RCEF FITS expands with 25 new brgy kiosks

ATI-CL launched twenty-five new Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund – Farmers' Information and Technology Services (RCEF FITS) Kiosks to support the Local Government Units (LGUs) in establishing a "satellite" FITS Center in their respective areas.

The said kiosks aim to bring rice and rice-related information and technology services to farmers at the barangay level through the establishment and enhancement of local FITS.

Under the extension component, ATI aims to enhance the access to

information of the rice farmers by tapping the Farmers' Information and Technology Services (FITS) Centers in the identified areas.

The locations of new RCEF FITS Kiosks in the region are as follows:

(1) San Marcelino, Zambales: (a) Brgy. Sta. Fe, (b) Brgy. Buhawen, (c) Brgy. Aglao, (d) Brgy. San Rafael, and (e) Brgy. Linusungan; (2) Arayat, Pampanga: (a) Brgy. Camba, (b) Brgy. Matamo, (c) Brgy. Turu, (d) Brgy. Candating, and (e) Brgy. Lacmit; (3) Camiling, Tarlac: (a) Brgy. Birbira, (b) Brgy. Libueg, (c) Brgy. Bilad, (d) Brgy. Marawi,

and (e) Brgy. Malacampa; (4) San Jose City, Nueva Ecija: (a) Brgy. Villa Floresta, (b) Brgy. Culaylay, (c) Brgy. Porais, (d) Brgy. Palestina, and (e) Brgy. Caanawan; (5) Dipaculao, Aurora: (a) Brgy. Toytoy, (b) Brgy. Dimabuno, (c) Brgy. Mucdol, (d) Brgy. Ipil, and (e) Brgy. Calaoan.

Along with the expansion of FITS Kiosks is the establishment of new RCEF FITS Centers in Dilasag, Aurora; San Jose, Tarlac; Mexico, Pampanga; Baliwag, Bulacan; and Bocaue, Bulacan.

JLGJoaquin

1st Digital Agri Congress... *from page 11...*

answered prayer kasi meron na palang programang ganito ang ATI so expect po na itatap po namin kayo para naman po matuto ang aming mga farmers sa San Marcelino," said Mr. Remin Sardo, Municipal Agriculturist of San Marcelino, Zambales. He said that they will surely connect with ATI to help the farmers in their municipality in the digitalization of agriculture.

Mr. Victorio Joson, Jr., Municipal Agriculturist of San Ildefonso, Bulacan, also shared that they were inspired with the discussions and best practices shared during the event.

"Talagang timely and relevant ang mga topics na nadiscuss. Kailangan na talaga nating i-upgrade ang pagbibigay

ng serbisyo sa ating mga magsasaka. Nainspire po kami at sana next na kami na magbibigay ng best practices," he revealed.

This event is the first of its kind to be implemented throughout the Philippines. The next one will be conducted next year in Central Luzon. **EDALAñada**

HOW DID HE GOAT THERE?

By: Johanna B. Sta. Cruz

BIRTH OF A LEADER

At a young age of 25, Allan Matias, Jr. became president of Pagkasa ng Kabataan sa Saudi Pias 4-H Club in Rio Chico, General Tinio, Nueva Ecija. The 4-H organization led by Allan started doing flower arrangements from recycled materials. With Php 1,000 as initial capital, the group managed to double it and encouraged more out-of-school youth to join the project.

He decided to engage in agripreneurship after joining the Binhi ng Pag-asa Program (BPP) in 2021. *“Wala po akong love sa agriculture dati, pero dahil po sa training (BPP), nagkaroon ako ng love sa nature – na mas pahalagahan at protektahan ang kalikasan at ang mga bumubuo rito,”* he shared.

The BPP training Allan attended in 2021 sparked his sense of leadership. He encouraged his members to actively participate in group activities as he believes that one learns by doing. *“Natuto kami habang gumagawa and we make the best better. Ang mabuti ay pagbubutihin pa,”* he emphasized.

In December 2021, the group received 60 free-range chickens and two goats as an agri-starter kit from the BPP. Just like any other business, theirs had ups and downs. They encountered high mortality of chicken. They tried identifying the cause and changed the type of feeds but nothing happened.

STEPPING UP ON A LARGER STONE

Allan did not let the challenges stop the group from pursuing the agricultural project. As a leader, he stepped up in researching the in-demand livestock in town and decided to trade their chicken with goats.

Thirty (30) chickens were sold for Php 9,000, which they used to buy three (3) goats. Currently, Allan’s group is raising 10 free-range chickens and five (5) goats. One of the goats is expected to give birth in 2023.

The group established a market for their agricultural products by maximizing the use of social media. Now, they are hoping to build an agricultural learning site where they can manage all their agribusinesses.

Meanwhile, Allan is thankful as he is receiving more support from his fellow youth and local government unit in building up his strengths as a young leader.

As an active and passionate young leader in the community, he influences and inspires youth to engage in agriculture.

“Kapag meron kang inumpisahan at itinanim, meron kang aanihin pagdating ng panahon dahil naniniwala ako na ang kabataan ang binhi ng pag-asa,” he said.

ALLAN’S TIPS FOR BECOMING A LEADER

Here are five steps I do as the leader of the Pagkasa ng Kabataan sa Saudi Pias 4-H Club.

1

KNOW YOUR TEAM

Always be nice to your co-officers and all members of the organization. You must care about your 4-H members and also motivate them to pursue the organization’s mission because each person is unique in both personal and social aspects.

2

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Be disciplined. As a leader, this is the only way you can discipline others while also sharing virtues with them. Always promote a collaborative work environment. Remember, that the most effective leaders are not the ones who control people, but the ones who communicate with all team members. Let them know all the available options, and get everyone engaged.

3

ALWAYS BE READY TO WORK HARD AND REMAIN PATIENT

Along with faith and rest, the major keys to becoming a better version of ourselves are hard work and patience. Remember, when we begin to be honest with ourselves and our goals, we know that hard work is one of the only answers to reaching those goals.

4

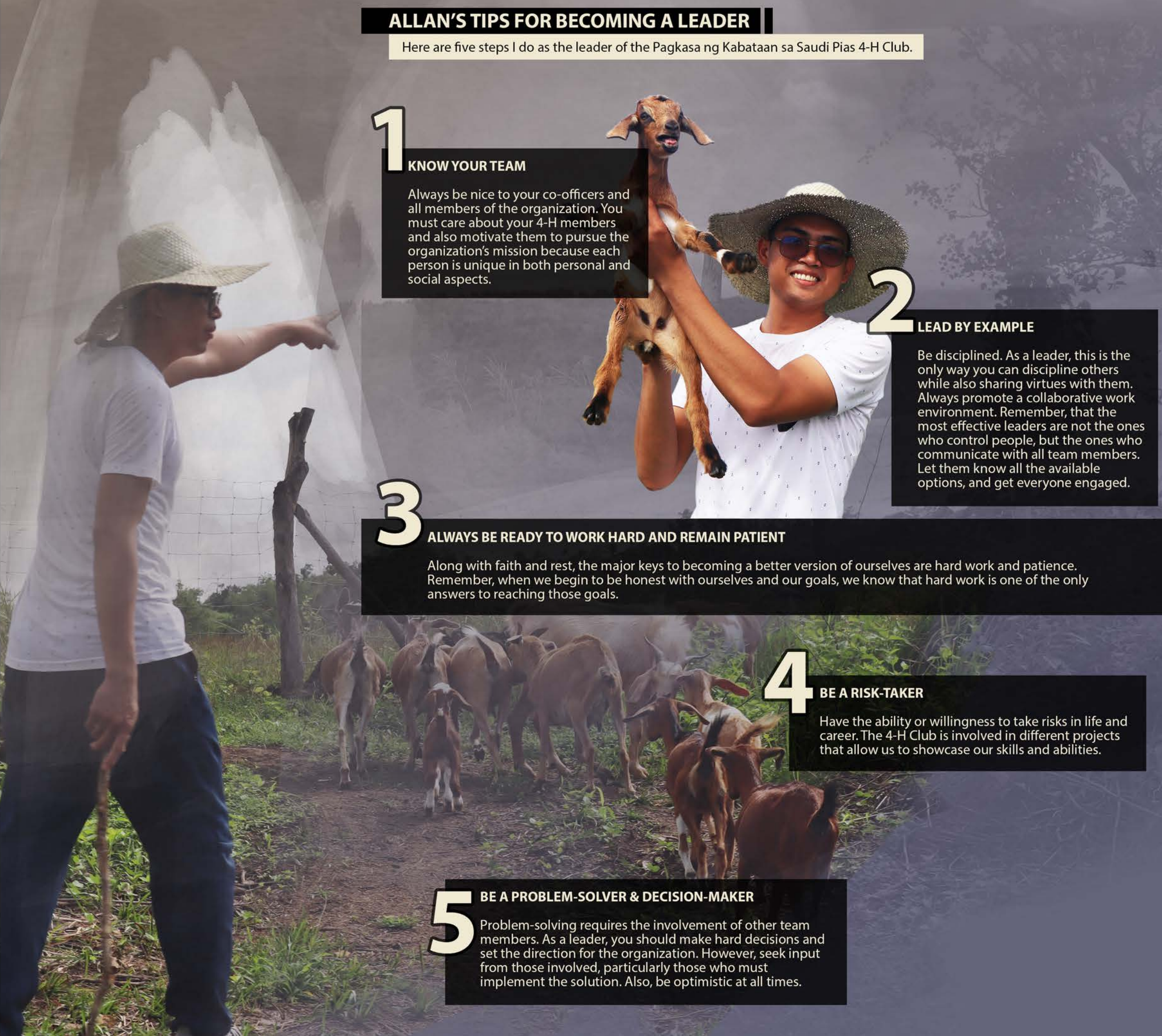
BE A RISK-TAKER

Have the ability or willingness to take risks in life and career. The 4-H Club is involved in different projects that allow us to showcase our skills and abilities.

5

BE A PROBLEM-SOLVER & DECISION-MAKER

Problem-solving requires the involvement of other team members. As a leader, you should make hard decisions and set the direction for the organization. However, seek input from those involved, particularly those who must implement the solution. Also, be optimistic at all times.





FEATURE STORY

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HOW DID HE GOAT THERE?



MISSION

Empowerment and building capacities of agriculture and fisheries stakeholders for sustainable development.

QUALITY POLICY

The ATI, as the orchestrator of the National Extension System, ensures harmonized management of agricultural and fishery extension delivery systems in empowering the farmers and fisherfolk for food security, poverty alleviation and and social equity for sustainable development.

VISION

Food availability and affordability for every Filipino family through excellent extension services in agriculture and fisheries.

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