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FROM WANDERING TO FARMING

Story on Page 34

A SUCCESS STORY OF

AZZIL VANCERE M. CANTOS

FARM ADMINISTRATOR OF REVITALIZING
AGRI-TOURISM VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTER

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MILESTONES

Highlights of 1st Semester Accomplishments

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ABOUT THE COVER



Milestones reflect ATI-MIMAROPA's collective achievements from the first semester, made possible through collaboration with partners and stakeholders. These milestones showcase significant progress in improving practices, expanding knowledge, and enhancing the skills of farmers and clients. Through various training and extension activities, we have developed more capable and skilled individuals, equipped with the knowledge needed for sustainable and productive agriculture.

We are deeply grateful to all those who played a crucial role in achieving our targets.



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ATI MIMAROPA, GOF Empower AEWs with BSF Technology

by: Jean Alexa E. Templo

To equip Agricultural Extension Workers (AEWs) with sustainable and cost-effective alternative feeds for livestock, poultry, and fish, the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) in MIMAROPA collaborated with the Gabutero Organic Farm (GOF), one of its Learning Sites for Agriculture (LSA) in Bongabong, Oriental Mindoro, for the conduct of two batches of two-day training on Black Soldier Fly (BSF) Production Technology on March 6-7, 2024 and May 13-14, 2024 at Lola's Healthy Farm, Magsaysay, Occidental Mindoro and GOF, Bongabong, Oriental Mindoro, respectively.

The BSF (*Hermetia illucens*) is far from being an ordinary fly. This extraordinary insect might just hold the answer to the soaring costs of feeds and fertilizers, a pressing concern for many farmers. BSF larvae offer an excellent source of protein, making them an excellent feed for various farm animals including poultry, pigs, and even fish. Moreover, they play a crucial role in waste management, efficiently consuming biodegradable materials.

The training, facilitated by Mr. Nelson B. Gabutero, LSA cooperator of GOF, provided participants with hands-on activities and comprehensive insights into BSF production technology, giving them a practical understanding of BSF rearing and its applications.



Mr. Gabutero also shared valuable information on the economic viability of BSF production, emphasizing its return on investment. Armed with this knowledge, the AEWs learned the profitability of integrating BSF into their farming and fishing practices.

To initiate their BSF initiatives in their respective localities, the AEWs were provided with cultured BSF and larvae as starter kits. They expressed eagerness to replicate and disseminate this technology in partnership with local government units and LSA, recognizing its potential to enhance agricultural productivity and sustainability.

In her impressions, Ms. Anabel L. Mandac of Revitalizing Agri-Tourism Vocational Training Center Inc. highlighted the significance of BSF and its potential benefits in animal husbandry, horticulture, and agriculture.

Moreover, Ms. Mandac emphasized the entrepreneurial opportunities presented by BSF production, noting its dual role in waste management and income generation.

"Ibahagi ko rin ito sa iba upang magkaroon sila ng ideya tungkol sa BSF, na hindi lahat ng langaw ay marumi; maaari rin itong pagkakitaan at alagaan," she added.

The BSF training empowered 41 AEWs in the various municipalities of Oriental and Occidental Mindoro.



73 Farmers Complete Training on Productivity Enhancement of Rice Area (PERA)

Michael Daven T. Jugno

A total of 73 Agricultural Extension Workers and Local Farmer Technicians successfully completed the 'Training on Productivity Enhancement of Rice Area (PERA)' on March 11-15, 2024, at Lola's Healthy Farm in Poblacion, Magsaysay, Occidental Mindoro; April 15-19, 2024, at Ala Amid Bed and Breakfast in San Pedro, Puerto Princesa City, Palawan; and June 3-7, 2024, at Gabutero Organic Farm in Labonan, Bongabong, Oriental Mindoro.

Mr. Jay-ar B. Madriaga, Agriculturist II, and Mr. Jayson N. Erondo, Agriculturist II/OIC-Section Chief, served as the resource speakers for the five-day training. Through lecture-discussion, they equipped the participants with the necessary skills in rice farming, including its Good Agricultural Practices (GAP).

Mr. Madriaga focused on practical applications through lectures on the Rice-Based Integrated Farming System, the Palayamanan System, and the Establishment and Management of the Rice-Duck System. Meanwhile, Mr. Erondo delved into the Evolution of Good Agricultural GAP in the Philippines and the Code of GAP to further improved the participants' understanding of GAP in agriculture: to reduce environmental impacts and maximize agricultural outputs while ensuring economic viability and food safety.



Moreover, they learned through hands-on activities about the process of preparing Urea-Molasses-Mineral Blocks, as well as the steps and best practices in seed and seedling preparation, thus acquiring hands-on experience in farming methods essential for sustainable agriculture.

One of the highlights of the training was the completion of the re-entry plan by the participants. This plan ensures that the knowledge and skills gained during the training will be effectively applied in their respective communities.

The three batches of training on PERA were spearheaded by the Agricultural Training Institute in MIMAROPA through its Partnership and Accreditation Section.



ATI MIMAROPA hones Farmer Leaders' Skills in Agricultural Extension Proposals

Michael Daven T. Jugno



To support agricultural extension projects and strengthen initiatives addressing rice pests and diseases, the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) in MIMAROPA successfully conducted two batches of training on proposal writing entitled "Beyond Words: Unleashing Excellence in Proposal Writing" on April 10-12, 2024, and May 20-22, 2024, at Hillside Resort, Poblacion, Magsaysay, Occidental Mindoro, and DosFourDos Integrated Farm, Aborlan, Palawan, respectively.

Ms. Jezell dT. Dela Cruz, Information Officer III of Mindoro State University, served as a resource speaker, facilitating the three-day training and equipping the participants with the necessary skills to develop and articulate proposals effectively.

To address agricultural challenges, they engaged in various activities, from problem analysis to project design and implementation planning, aimed at crafting comprehensive proposals tailored to their needs.

With an emphasis on SMART goals - setting objectives that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-bound, the participants identified tangible project outputs, ensuring clarity and feasibility of the proposals.

Ms. Dela Cruz also discussed the significance of risk assessment and management, with participants learning about the importance of assessing and mitigating potential threats to proposed projects. Through risk analysis exercises and scenario planning, they identified unforeseen challenges in their proposals, ensuring resilience in implementation.

Moreover, the training covered topics on budgeting and resource allocation, allowing participants to master the art of financial stewardship and resource optimization - an essential skill for sustainable project implementation.

The highlight of the training was the presentation of their individual project proposals, receiving feedback, comments, and suggestions from Ms. Dela Cruz and Mr. Jayson N. Erondo, Agriculturist II/Project Officer.

Led by ATI-MIMAROPA through its Partnership and Accreditation Section, the training was attended by 48 participants from various LSAs in Oriental, Occidental Mindoro and Palawan.



Farmer Leaders Capacitates in Agro-Enterprise Development

Michael Daven T. Jugno



With the aim of promoting sustainable agricultural development and economic growth, a three-day Training on Social Preparation for Rice Clusters: Capability Enhancement for Farmer Leaders was held at Lola's Healthy Farm, Poblacion, Magsaysay, Occidental Mindoro on April 2-4, 2024.

Participants appreciated the lectures given by the different resource speakers. From the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) in MIMAROPA, Agriculturist II Mr. Jay-Ar B. Madriaga discussed the Farmer Clusters for Supply Consolidation.



Also, from the Department of Agriculture's Farm and Fisheries Clustering and Consolidation Program (DA F2C2), Mr. Jhon Lester Evangelio, Mr. Ray Neptune Quindong, and Mr. Robert Jayson E. Rica covered topics such as Understanding the Market and Identifying Market Opportunities, Ensuring Supply for the Market, Agro-Enterprise Objectives, Agro-Enterprise Partnership Building, Functional Working Groups, Leadership of Farmer Clusters, and Agro-Enterprise Facilitator as Agents of Change.

One of the highlights of the training was the hands-on activity wherein the participants were grouped based on their respective cooperatives and associations to collaboratively craft their Cluster Development Plans, suited to their needs and priorities. Facilitators and resource speakers provided guidance and support throughout the process, ensuring that each plan was comprehensive and attainable.



Mr. Rudy T. Hilario, one of the participants, expressed his gratitude and commitment to sharing the new knowledge he gained with his fellow farmers.

"Ang mga natutunan ko po ay akin pong ibabahagi sa aking mga kasamahan sa kooperatiba. Bilang isang magsasaka na nag nanais mapalaki ang kita, ito ay isang malaking tulong po upang maisabuhay namin at magamit sa aming pagsasaka. Ang mga konsepto at estratehiya ay magagamit ko sa papalaki ng kita sa pagsasaka. Tayo po ay naging instrumento para maipaabot ito sa iba pang magsasaka kaya ibahagi po natin", he shared.



Spearheaded by the Agricultural Training Institute in MIMAROPA through its Partnership and Accreditation Section, the training was attended by 25 participants, including farmers from various cooperatives and associations in the province.

ATI-MIMAROPA, DA-MIMAROPA Team Up to Implement the MEL Tool

Erlan D. Pasana

The Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) in MIMAROPA and the Department of Agriculture (DA) - MIMAROPA Research Division collaboratively conducted Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Tool interviews in the provinces of Oriental Mindoro, Occidental Mindoro, and Palawan on April 15-19, 2024; April 22-26, 2024; and May 6-10, 2024, respectively.

The activity aimed to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of various rice program interventions for farmers. Moreover, it was designed to determine their awareness of the Rice Crop Manager Advisory Services (RCMAS) and whether they have utilized the RCMAS recommendations provided to them.

Prior to the series of interviews, the ATI MIMAROPA conducted a briefing on the use and operation of the outcome-based ME Tool on April 2, 2024, which was attended by 12 personnel from the DA-MIMAROPA Research Division and three staff from the Center.



MMr. Michael Daven T. Jugno, Technical Support III from the Information Services Section of ATI MIMAROPA, and Ms. Marilyn Sanchez, Senior Science Research Specialist from the DA-MIMAROPA Research Division, served as resource persons for the said briefing, where they provided the participants with updates on the use and operation of the MEL application, the random sampling procedure, and how to gather data through interviews with rice farmers.

After the activity, Mr. Luisito D. Parcon, head of the DA-MIMAROPA Research Division, appreciated the support provided by ATI MIMAROPA, especially in assisting them during the scheduled MEL Tool interviews in the rice-producing provinces.

As an output, a total of 600 farmer-respondents were interviewed, representing various barangays in Calapan City, Pinamalayan, Bongabong, and Bulalacao in Oriental Mindoro; the municipalities of San Jose, Rizal, and Sablayan in Occidental Mindoro; and the municipalities of Bataraza, Brooke's Point, and Roxas in Palawan.



Narra Rice Farmers Receive Site-Specific Recommendations through RCMAS Briefing

Erlan D. Pasana

A total of twenty (20) rice farmers received one-page, site-specific recommendations during a one-day briefing on the Rice Crop Manager Advisory Service (RCMAS) on May 10, 2024, at the Farmers Information and Technology Services (FITS) Center in Narra, Palawan.

Center Director Pat Andrew B. Barrientos was present during the activity and highlighted the importance of RCMAS recommendations in rice production in his message. He also commended the participants for their support and active participation and informed them about the various programs of the Department of Agriculture – Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) on commodities other than rice.



In the briefing, the participants learned about the uses and importance of the RCMAS application. Although most of them were already familiar with the site-specific recommendation, they still commended the resource speakers for their clear discussions on its features and functions.

Mr. Marcelino A. Bautista, a member of the Sandoval Farmer's Association, emphasized his impression that with the increasing prices of fertilizers, he will give it a try and apply the recommendation to his rice farm to see whether it is effective or not.

"Dahil sa mahusay na pagpapaliwanag ng ating mga tagapagsalita, parang gusto kong subukan ang RCMAS recommendation na natanggap ko sa susunod na taniman. Kung epektibo ito, ako mismo ang magsasabi sa aking mga kapwa magsasaka na gamitin ito", he shared.

As support to the Municipal Agriculture Office - Narra in the implementation of RCMAS, the ATI in MIMAROPA awarded one handheld GPS device to the FITS Center through Acting Municipal Agriculturist Eugene P. Sumaydeng.

As an expression of appreciation, Mr. Sumaydeng committed to improving the facilities and equipment of Narra's FITS Center so that it could cater to more rice farmers who want to receive RCMAS recommendations.





In line with the center's vision of promoting food safety and ensuring the quality of onion and garlic produce in the MIMAROPA region, the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) in MIMAROPA spearheaded a comprehensive "Training on Onion and Garlic Production with Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)" on March 5-7, 2024, at CAFÉ Hall, ATI MIMAROPA, Barcenaga, Naujan, Oriental Mindoro.

Mr. Niño A. Magracia, Agricultural Technician II of the Office of the Provincial Agriculture of Romblon, one of the participants in the three-day training, said that this initiative is highly important as there are farmers who have started to venture into onion production in the province of Romblon.

ATI-MIMAROPA Trains Farmers in Onion, Garlic Good Agricultural Practices

Richard R. Templo

Aligned with the provisions of Republic Act 10611, also known as the Food Safety Act of 2013, the training covered a lecture on food safety practices focusing on recognizing potential hazards and implementing measures to ensure the production of food that is both safe and of high quality.

Aside from discussions on onion and garlic farming technology, the participants actively engaged in workshops on the preparation of farm layouts incorporating GAP and cost analysis based on local conditions. Moreover, they also learned about proper record-keeping and understood that low onion prices do not always result in losses for farmers.

"Sa ngayon, ako ay nagkaroon din ng interes na magtanim ng sibuyas. Hindi sila magsisisi na kami ang pinapunta para kung makababa kami sa aming mga munisipyo, maituturo namin ang tamang proseso ng pagtanim ng sibuyas at bawang alinsunod sa GAP," explained Mr. Magracia.

The training was attended by a total of 30 agricultural extension workers and farmers from the different provinces in the region who will be partners of ATI in promoting food safety and improving agricultural



ATI Upskills Romblon AEWs and Farmers with Skills in Pest and Disease Management

Erlan D. Pasana

To enhance the capabilities of extension workers and farmers in diagnosing and managing pests and diseases affecting vegetable crops, the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) in MIMAROPA successfully conducted a five-day Training of Trainers (TOT) on Vegetable Pests and Diseases Identification and Control from March 18-22, 2024 at the Simple Living Hotel, Poctoy, Odiongan, Romblon.

Despite the varied backgrounds of the 24 participants, they acquired essential and up-to-date knowledge on the accurate identification and control of pests and diseases discussed by the resource speakers (RPs), namely, Mr. Walter C. Jatico and Ms. Roxanne M. Fabriquel from Mindoro State University, as well as Ms. Cheri Dawn F. Falogme of ATI MIMAROPA.

The participants also engaged in an actual field collection at the communal vegetable area in Brgy. Mayha, Odiongan, which is owned by Ms. Dally Jean F. Florendo, a graduate of the Season-Long TOT on Vegetable Production in 2015, to practice their skills in identifying pests and spotting plants infected with diseases.



After the hands-on exercise, the RPs facilitated valuable discussions on improving garden management practices. The participants shared their ideas and provided advice to the farmers managing the area on proper pest and disease management in the vegetable garden.

One of the highlights of the training is the preparation of the participants' action plans. Reflecting on their experience, they expressed appreciation for the relevance of the training, emphasizing their role as TOT graduates in addressing prevalent issues concerning pests and diseases of vegetables.



"Nagpapasalamat po ako at nakasama po ako sa training na ito. Masasabi ko po na marami akong natutunan, dahil hindi ko po alam na hindi pala pwedeng bara-bara lang tayo sa mga tactics o paraan ng pagsasaka. Dito ko po natutunan na may mga approaches na dapat nating sundin sa pamamagitan ng scientific method ng pag-aapply. Kaya't lubos po akong nagpapasalamat sa ATI, dahil marami po kaming natutunan at hindi po namin ito ipagdadamot. Ishe-share po namin ito sa iba," Mr. Hilarion Agustin, Jr. of Di Biro Farmers Association, Cajidiocan, shared.

Looking ahead, participants highlighted the need for continued capacity-building efforts in future training courses on Biological Control Agents and Season-Long TOT on Vegetable Production. They believe that such initiatives are necessary to ensure the sustainability and resilience of vegetable production practices in the province of Romblon.



Promoting Food Safety Practices and Value-Adding Processes for Onions in Occidental Mindoro

Erlan D. Pasana

To promote food safety practices and enhance the value chain of onion production in Occidental Mindoro, 31 Agricultural Extension Workers, farmers, and agri-enthusiasts successfully graduated on April 18, 2024, from the "Training on Onion Processing with Good Manufacturing Practices and Gender and Development," held at Seasons Hotel and Convention Center in San Jose.

The three-day training, which started on April 16, involved various discussions and hands-on activities under the guidance of the resource speakers, namely, Mr. Arvin Jonathan Lumata Flores, Instructor I/Technology Transfer Officer, and Mr. Ryan Mark A. Ambong, Instructor III, both from Occidental Mindoro State College (OMSC)-Murtha Campus.

One of the practical sessions was on onion value-adding processes conducted at the food processing facility of OMSC – Murtha Campus. During the activity, food safety principles were practiced, ensuring the production of safe and high-quality onion products.



Participants also learned about the significance of packaging and labeling in product marketing. Using tools like Canva, they were taught how to design attractive product labels and packaging materials. Moreover, they computed the cost for their products, producing a total of 36 bottles of pickled onions and 16 packs of dried onion flakes with packaging during the training.

Aside from the knowledge and skills gained by the participants, they were able to form collaborations with OMSC for possible interventions for the benefit of onion farmers in the province. Additionally, the participants tasted the latest food products of the school, such as onion-flavored ice cream and onion pandesal.

Furthermore, the training shed light on gender roles in agriculture, emphasizing the importance of breaking stereotypes and promoting inclusivity. Participants attained meaningful insights into the valuable contributions of both men and women in farming activities, fostering equal opportunities and recognition for all.

Ms. Josephine S. Gamboa, a farmer from the Samahan ng Organikong Magsasaka ng Kanlurang Mindoro, shared her appreciation for the training, particularly highlighting its relevance in promoting alternative ways of storing and marketing onions.

"Marami po akong natutunan lalo na sa pagproseso ng sibuyas. Noon po, marami kaming nasasayang na sibuyas dahil wala kaming cold storage. Bilang simpleng magsasaka lang, hindi namin kayang magkaroon nito. Tungkol naman sa mga label bilang mga mamimili, marami kaming hindi alam. Madalas lang kaming bumibili ngunit hindi namin tinitingnan ang mga nilalaman", she expressed.

The said training was facilitated by the Career Development and Management Section of the Agricultural Training Institute in MIMAROPA, led by Ms. Cheri Dawn F. Falogme, Media Production Specialist II/HVC Point Person.

ATI MIMAROPA Holds Training on Corn Cluster Development

Ira L. Gusi



In a collaborative effort to strengthen agricultural practices and empower farm cluster leaders, the Agricultural Training Institute in MIMAROPA held a four-day "Training of Trainers (TOT) on Corn Cluster Development" on April 2-5, 2024 at DosFourDos Integrated Farm, Aborlan, Palawan.

The TOT, approved with 11 Continuing Professional Development points by the Professional Regulation Commission, was joined by participants eager to learn about topics on agro-enterprise development, including entrepreneurial mindset and market clustering strategies.

The resource speakers from the Department of Agriculture MIMAROPA Region led the sessions through interactive workshops and role-playing activities, ensuring that participants received thorough insights and practical guidance on value chain mapping, market interviews, and production planning.

One of the remarkable lectures focused on the discussion of the agro-enterprise clustering approach and market chain studies, providing participants with doable strategies for enhancing farm productivity and market competitiveness. Moreover, real-life case studies and group discussions further enhanced their learning, promoting a collaborative environment among them.

A highlight of the TOT was the field visit to Project Zacchaeus Marketing Cooperative, where participants gained firsthand knowledge of digital clustering solutions and market connectivity initiatives. Representatives from the cooperative shared valuable insights on product marketing and digital integration, inspiring the participants to implement similar strategies in their communities.

"Iba ang epekto sa akin ng pagsasanay na ito, dahil ngayon ay nabuksan ang aking pag-lisip kung paano mailalapit ang mga magsasaka sa ating pamahalaan, pati na rin kung paano ilalapit ang ating mga produkto sa mga mamumuhunan o mamimili. Ilalaan ko ang aking sarili upang makatulong pa sa aking mga kasamahang magsasaka," shared Mr. Joel A. Matin, Farmer leader from Magara Farmers Association.

A total of 29 agricultural extension workers and farmer leaders attended the said TOT.



Empowering AEWs and Farmer Leaders of Occidental Mindoro and Romblon through SSNM

John Eric V. Arguelles

To address improper fertilizer application and cultivation practices among corn farmers, the Agricultural Training Institute in MIMAROPA, through its Partnership and Accreditation Section, conducted two batches of training on "Site-Specific Nutrient Management (SSNM)" on May 14-16, 2024 and June 4-6, 2024 at Lola's Healthy Farm in Magsaysay, Occidental Mindoro and Simple Living Hotel, Odiongan, Romblon, respectively.

The training aims to enhance the knowledge and skills of participants on site specific nutrient management for maize production and use the Nutrient Expert for Maize Philippines (NEMPh) application.

NEMPh is a decision support software that employs the principles of site-specific nutrient management, enabling farm advisors to develop fertilizer recommendations tailored to specific fields or growing environments.

The three-day training consisted of four modules. Module 1 introduced the concept of digital agriculture, emphasizing its role in modern farming practices. Module 2 focused on SSNM, providing participants with techniques to enhance crop nutrition. Meanwhile, Module 3 addressed fertilizer application and seed selection, covering a range from open-pollinated varieties to hybrids and traditional seeds. Finally, Module 4 introduced the NEMPh, a cutting-edge tool designed for precision agriculture.

During the training, the participants appreciated the hands-on activities, which included actual field interviews with corn farmers, as well as inputting information into the NEMPh application.

They also prepared and submitted re-entry plans to ensure their commitment to conducting the same training in their respective localities.



Leslie D. Aroc, Agricultural Technologist from the Provincial Agriculture Office in Occidental Mindoro, expressed gratitude and commitment to sharing the new knowledge she gained with her fellow farmers.

"Ang SSNM, napakalaking tulong sa mga magsasaka. Sa isang click lang, agad kang makakakuha ng rekomendasyon at resulta. Sa aming training, marami kaming na-encounter na problema sa paggamit ng app, kaya kapag na-improve ito, magiging malaking tulong talaga," she expressed.

The said training equipped 44 Agricultural Extension Workers and farmer leaders in the said two provinces.



61 AEWs and Farmer Leaders Complete Training on Corn Production and Post-Harvest Management

John Eric V. Arguelles

A total of 61 farmer leaders and Agricultural Extension Workers (AEWs) from various clusters in the provinces of Occidental Mindoro and Palawan successfully completed the ten-day Training of Trainers (TOT) on "Corn Production and Post-Harvest Management" on February 12-23, 2024 and April 15-26, 2024 in Mamburao, Occidental Mindoro, and Aborlan, Palawan, respectively.

The said TOT is designed to equip participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to become effective trainers in the field. It had two phases: Phase I focused on Corn Production Technologies and Farming Systems, while Phase II was on value-adding and entrepreneurship.

In Phase I, the participants learned about topics such as corn industry, corn morphology, production technologies of corn, corn seed, corn-based farming systems and economics of corn production.



On the other hand, Phase II covered lectures on the different topics like feeds processing, silage processing, and business planning.

One of the highlights of the training was the micro-teaching presentation, during which participants presented and discussed their chosen topics. To improve their presentations, the panelists provided comments, suggestions, and recommendations.

Moreover, the participants prepared a re-entry plan in which they outlined the current situation and identified problems in their respective municipalities regarding corn production.

The said TOT was facilitated by the Partnership and Accreditation Section led by its OIC-Chief Mr. Jayson N. Erondo.





Boosting Organic Farming in Marinduque the PGS Way!

Karen T. Vicente

To increase the number of Participatory Guarantee System (PGS)-certified farmers and accredited organic farms in the MIMAROPA region, the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) in MIMAROPA, in partnership with the Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Standards (BAFS), conducted a "Training on PGS Group Expansion" on May 20-24, 2024, at Hotel Marinduque, Boac, Marinduque.

This initiative focused on capacitating two PGS groups in the province by refining their draft Manual of Operations (MOO) and Internal Standards (IS), especially in light of newly approved standards relevant to organic agriculture (OA).

The training was a concerted effort to guide these groups through the accreditation procedures, PGS peer-review, and certification processes. Mr. Marc Owell A. Ama and Ms. Anna Dominique Cadsawan from BAFS served as resource persons (RPs), providing crucial insights into the newly approved Philippine National Standards pertinent to OA.



Moreover, Engr. Karen T. Vicente, Agriculturist I/OA Point Person of ATI-MIMAROPA, discussed the certification and accreditation processes necessary for achieving Organic Certifying Body (OCB) status.

During the workshop, the RPs also assisted the participants and gave valuable feedback and recommendations for the improvement of their IS and MOO.

The two PGS groups in Marinduque—the Bo-ACT PGS group in Boac and the Sta. Cruz PGS group in Sta. Cruz—have already undergone BAFS pre-inspection and are scheduled for final inspection for certification this year. Following certification, these groups will need to apply for accreditation within one year to achieve the ultimate goal of becoming an accredited OCB.



Strengthening the SOMKAM PGS Group in Occidental Mindoro through TOT

Karen T. Vicente

In an effort to strengthen the organic agriculture movement, the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) in MIMAROPA led an intensive 10-day 'Training of Trainers (TOT) on Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) for Organic Implementers and Identified PGS Organizations on June 10-21, 2024 at Lola's Healthy Farm, Poblacion, Magsaysay, Occidental Mindoro.

The TOT, held in collaboration with the Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Standards (BAFS) and the Department of Agriculture-Regional Field Office (DA-RFO), aimed to equip PGS groups with the knowledge and skills necessary to establish and operate PGS systems in accordance with organic agriculture (OA) standards and technical regulations.

The training employed a series of lectures on the newly approved Philippine National Standards pertinent to organic agriculture. Mr. Marc Owell A. Ama and Mr. Ibrahim A. Racmat, both from BAFS, served as resource persons and co-facilitators, guiding participants through the complexities of the standards.

Workshops on drafting Internal Standards (IS) and Manuals of Operations (MOO) were also conducted, resulting in the initial drafts of three IS for organic crops and organic animals, including poultry, small ruminants, and large ruminants.

During the second week, Engr. Karen T. Vicente, Agriculturist I at ATI-MIMAROPA, covered the Certification and Accreditation Process for PGS groups, as well as the peer review and certification protocols. Participants were then guided through the drafting of their MOO, following Department Circular No. 2, Series of 2022. In preparation for their pre-inspection with BAFS, the PGS core members finalized their Organic Management Plan, farm layout, and farm map.

One of the highlights of the training was the mock inspection and actual peer review conducted on a farm identified within the core group. The peer review committee and the Regional Pre-Assessment Team led the inspection, teaching participants how to generate findings and comply with the Correction and Corrective Action Plan form.

Ms. Maria Luisa A. Hartshorn, OA Point Person of the Municipal Agriculture Office of San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, voiced her strong support for the establishment of the Samahan ng Organikong Magsasaka ng Kanlurang Mindoro (SOMKAM) as a core PGS group.

"Malaki po ang gampanin ng bawat isa sa atin upang magtagumpay ang ating adbokasiya. Nakikita natin ang kahalagahan ng pagsasaka sa organikong pamamaraan. Ito na ang tamang panahon para lalo nating pag-igtingin ang ating sistema ng pagsasaka sapagkat tayo ay maswerte dahil nandito na ang buong suporta ng gobyerno. Iyan ay upang mapalakas pa natin ang mga maliit na magsasaka sa pamamagitan ng PGS," - she emphasized



With 24 participants, including SOMKAM members, Agricultural Extension Workers, and representatives from the academe, the TOT concluded with the scheduling of a pre-inspection for the Core PGS Group with BAFS, DA-RFO, and ATI in August 2024. While waiting for the scheduled date, the core members of SOMKAM will prepare all necessary documents and improve their farm operations in accordance with the standards.



ATI MIMAROPA, ATI-ITCPH Collaborate for Training of Trainers on Artificial Insemination

Erlan D. Pasana

To enhance swine breeding practices in the MIMAROPA region, the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) in MIMAROPA spearheaded a "Training of Trainers (TOT) on Swine Artificial Insemination (AI)" on April 15-19, 2024 at the ATI - International Training Center on Pig Husbandry (ITCPH), Marawoy, Lipa City, Batangas.

In collaboration with ATI-ITCPH, the participants of the TOT, composed of 19 Agricultural Extension Workers (AEWs) and one (1) farmer, expressed gratitude for the opportunity to improve their knowledge and skills in livestock breeding.

Among the participants was Mr. Michael G. Catabona, an AEW from the Provincial Veterinarian's Office - Occidental Mindoro, who emphasized the importance of continuous learning in improving farming practices. He highlighted the significance of AI in increasing agricultural productivity, motivating fellow participants to apply the learnings they acquired in their respective provinces.

"Nagpapasalamat ako sa ATI MIMAROPA at sa pag-imbita sa amin ulit sa ganitong training. Sa ATI-ITCPH, maraming salamat sa pagbibigay ng kaalaman pagdating sa AI. Sa mga kasamahan naming participants, sana pagdating natin sa ating mga sariling probinsya, ituloy lang natin ang ating mga natutunan at huwag nating kalimutan na ituro ito sa iba," he expressed.



Led by experienced resource speakers from ATI-ITCPH, the training provided participants with a step-by-step process of AI, including proper boar management, semen collection, laboratory evaluation, semen dilution/extension, semen storage, heat detection, and semen insemination.

They also became familiar with the setup of a functional AI laboratory, the use of basic AI equipment, learned about the common diseases of breeders, how to control them, and the economics of AI.

Dr. Ruth Miclat-Sonaco, Center Director of ATI-ITCPH, extended her appreciation to ATI MIMAROPA for selecting their Center as the venue for the training. She stressed the importance of capacity-building initiatives in advancing agricultural practices, particularly in the field of swine AI.

To support their future endeavors in swine breeding, a total of 20 participants were provided with essential AI supplies such as semen bottles and catheters after the conduct of the TOT.



Kaganhao Farmers Association Wraps Up Beef Cattle Production Training

Erlan D. Pasana

"Nais kong ipaabot ang aking pasasalamat sa Agricultural Training Institute (ATI), sa mga kinatawan ng Munisipyo at Probinsya, lalo na sa aming mga Resource Speakers. Talaga pong masasabi ko na "mission accomplished". Matagumpay po ang lahat. Gamitin natin ang ating natutunan, palakihin at alagaan nang maayos ang ating mga alagang baka."

Ms. Remedios Robles conveyed this message on behalf of the Kaganhao Farmers Association after completing the "Training on Beef Cattle Production and Enterprise Development" on March 13-15, 2024, in Brgy. Kaganhao, Sta. Cruz, Marinduque.

Over the course of three days, Mr. Emmanuel D. Mago, Assistant Professor IV at Cavite State University, and Ms. Alma L. Manalo, Training Specialist II at the ATI-MIMAROPA, served as resource speakers. The association's members gained knowledge through lectures on the beef cattle industry in the Philippines, beef cattle production technologies and practices, the breeding system, and the importance of record-keeping.

For hands-on activities, they also acquired practical skills in making feed supplements for cattle, such as Urea Molasses Mineral Block (UMMB), and in preparing silage. It was emphasized that livestock farmers must learn to make UMMB because it is essential for the growth of ruminants, and silage preparation helps them save on feed costs, particularly during drought seasons when resources are scarce.

To show her support, Ms. Susana Uy, Assistant Provincial Agriculturist of the Provincial Agriculture Office - Marinduque, attended the closing program of the activity. In her message, she encouraged the participants to put into practice what they had learned and share it with others.



Building on the success of the first batch training, three additional batches were conducted: May 7-9, 2024, in Gloria, Oriental Mindoro; May 21-23, 2024, in Buenavista, Marinduque; and June 18-20, 2024, in Calatrava, Romblon.

A total of 105 participants successfully graduated from the training, comprising Agricultural Extension Workers and farmers from the said municipalities in the MIMAROPA region.





Empowering AEWs in Palawan on Biosecurity Measures Against ASF

Erlan D. Pasana

In the ongoing battle against African Swine Fever (ASF), the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) in MIMAROPA conducted a training on biosecurity entitled "Training on Biosecured Swine Production: Mitigating ASF at the Farmer Level" on April 3-5, 2024 at JS Pension, Poblacion, Narra, Palawan.

With 26 Agricultural Extension Workers (AEWs), the training aimed to equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills to combat ASF and implement effective biosecurity measures at the grassroots level.

Dr. Dyesebel D. Chavez, Municipal Agricultural Officer from LGU-Lobo, Batangas; Ms. Roseanne D. Nilo, Media Production Specialist II of ATI MIMAROPA; and Mr. Dandy Elefane, an insurance representative from Puerto Princesa City, served as resource speakers who covered various aspects crucial to ASF prevention and management.

During the three-day training, the participants learned about topics such as introduction to ASF, understanding the disease, government policies, and intervention programs. They also engaged in participatory biosecurity risk assessment, focusing on biosecurity measures for farms, personnel, transport systems, meat establishments, and slaughterhouses.

Moreover, hands-on activities were conducted at the Narra Slaughterhouse, where participants practiced proper blood sample collection and handling techniques.

Apart from theoretical knowledge, participants were also tasked with developing biosecurity plans for their farms, reinforcing their commitment to safeguarding the swine industry against ASF and other diseases.

Reflecting on her experience, Violeta C. Magbanua from the Municipal Agriculture Office in Taytay, expressed gratitude for the training, emphasizing its significance in enhancing her understanding of ASF response procedures and farm biosecurity measures.

"Ang training na ito ay napakahalaga sa akin, dahil noong hindi pa ako nakakapag-training, akala ko na equipped na ako para makapag-response kung sakali mang darating ang ASF sa aming munisipyo. Ngunit sa pagpapatuloy ng training na ito sa loob ng tatlong araw, doon ko lang nalaman na napaka-unti pa lang pala ang aking kaalaman. Sa pamamagitan ng training na ito, marami akong natutunan kaya pag-uwi ko sa aming munisipyo, talagang alam ko na kung paano mag-response sa mga procedures," she shared.

With the AEWs' commitment, similar initiatives will continue to be rolled out in their respective municipalities, enabling communities to build resilience in the fight against ASF.



ATI MIMAROPA Hosts Regional Youth Camp

Erlan D. Pasana

The Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) in MIMAROPA recently hosted a Regional Youth Camp aimed at promoting youth engagement in agricultural development and providing a platform for showcasing talents and leadership skills. The event, held on March 19-21, 2024 at ATI-MIMAROPA, Barcenaga, Naujan, Oriental Mindoro gathered 50 coordinators, members, and other stakeholders from various chapters of the 4-H Club in the MIMAROPA region.

The event offered recreational activities and educational sessions. Participants engaged in 4-H rituals, including flag ceremonies and candle lighting, setting the tone for a meaningful gathering. Notably, the event featured insights from former trainees of international internship programs in Taiwan and Japan, namely, Mr. Lemuel Magnaye, FYFIPT Batch 1, and Mr. Kim Garbin, YFFLTPJ Batch 2023, who shared their experiences and encouraged youth participation in such initiatives.



A highlight of the camp was the presentation of entries in various contests, such as the 4-H Product Merchandise, 4-H Short Film, 4-H National Excellent Achievers Award (Hand and Heart Category), and the 4-H Agri Innovation Pitching. Standout proposals included "Vermitical City" by Mr. Gio Earl Laguerta and "Baka-Naman" by Mr. Kryslan Jann Domingo and Mr. Mark Joseph Hidalgo. The winning entry, "Vermitical City" particularly impressed with its demonstration of innovative agricultural practices.

Moreover, the camp covered important topics on Gender and Development, with Engr. Cristina Intong, the 4-H Point Person, leading discussions on gender equality and inclusivity in development initiatives. Participants gained valuable insights into addressing gender bias and promoting equality in agricultural endeavors.

In a spirit of camaraderie and competition, participants were divided into groups and tasked with completing challenges covering the four pillars of 4-H: Head, Heart, Hand, and Health. Throughout the camp, teams demonstrated their teamwork and agility, tackling various tasks from problem-solving to physical challenges.

The event also witnessed the oath-taking of the newly elected President and Vice President of the 4-H Club Regional Federation, symbolizing the beginning of a new chapter of leadership and collaboration within the organization.

The winners of the various contests are scheduled to represent the region in the upcoming 4-H National Youth Camp, which is scheduled for May 2024, promising further opportunities for growth and recognition on a national level.

MIMAROPA Delegate Bags Major Awards at 71st 4-H National Farm Youth Convention

Erlan D. Pasana

In a remarkable display of talent and dedication, Mr. Gio Earl C. Laguerta, the sole delegate from the MIMAROPA region, secured significant awards at the 71st 4-H National Farm Youth Convention, held on June 18-21, 2024 at the Siargao Island Sports and Tourism Center, Dapa, Siargao.

Mr. Laguerta, who serves as the 4-H Club Federation President of Calapan City, won 3rd place in both the Agri-Tale Contest and the Transformation Contest. Moreover, his exemplary contributions to the field earned him a spot as a finalist for the Most Outstanding 4-H Club Member award.

The event also recognized the exceptional efforts of Ms. Pamela E. Rago, the Supervising Agriculturist of the Calapan Agriculture Services Division, who was awarded the Most Outstanding 4-H Coordinator in the Municipal Category.

The awards and recognition received by Mr. Laguerta and Ms. Rago reflect their unwavering passion for serving and molding the future generation of agripreneurs in the region.



NATIONAL URBAN AND PERI-URBAN AGRICULTURE PROGRAM

Cultivating Urban Green Spaces: The Vegetable Derby with Harvest Festival in Brgy. Sta. Rita

Erlan D. Pasana

On May 27, 2024, Brgy. Sta. Rita in Calapan City, Oriental Mindoro, hosted the ceremonial planting for the Vegetable Derby with Harvest Festival, marking the official launch of the project under the National Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture Program (NUPAP).

This initiative aims to inspire urban residents to engage in vegetable farming, boost productivity, and encourage community participation in agricultural endeavors.

The activity is a collaborative effort led by the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) in MIMAROPA, the City Agricultural Services Division (CASD) of Calapan City,



and various seed companies, including Allied Botanical Corporation, East-West, Ramgo, and Kaneko Seeds.

Attendees included Calapan City Mayor Marilou F. Morillo; NUPAP Point Person of ATI-MIMAROPA Roseanne D. Nilo; Assistant Center Director of ATI-MIMAROPA Norberto C. Maur; CASD Focal Person Jasper Adriatico; CASD staff; representatives from seed companies; and the Sta. Rita Farmers Association.

This collaboration highlights a commitment to improving urban agriculture. The vegetable derby exemplifies the power of community-driven agricultural projects, and the harvest festival is scheduled for July 2024.

Empowering Communities: ATI MIMAROPA Initiates Seminar on Urban Agriculture (UA)

Erlan D. Pasana



The Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) in MIMAROPA successfully conducted four batches of "Seminars on Urban Agriculture (UA)" in the provinces of Occidental Mindoro, Palawan, Marinduque, and Oriental Mindoro. These seminars equipped a total of 116 participants, including extension workers, farmers, women, and agri-enthusiasts, with essential knowledge and skills needed to cultivate their own food in urban settings.

The first batch was conducted on February 20, 2024, in Brgy. Balansay, Mamburao, Occidental Mindoro, with 30 participants. In partnership with Rodriguez Integrated Farm, the second batch took place on April 8, 2024, at the Butterfly Garden and Cultural Heritage Farm in Brgy. Sta. Monica, Puerto Princesa City, Palawan, with 26 participants. The third batch, involving 30 participants, was successfully conducted on May 22, 2024, in Brgy. Mansiwat, Boac, Marinduque. The last batch was held in Brgy. Sta. Rita, Calapan City, Oriental Mindoro, on June 3, 2024, with 30 participants.

During the activities, resource person Roseanne D. Nilo, Media Production Specialist II/NUPAP Point Person of ATI-MIMAROPA, demonstrated water conservation and soil quality maintenance techniques crucial for the success of urban farming.

Ms. Nilo also elaborated on various aspects of UA, including suitable vegetable varieties and their diverse cultural management practices, customizing discussions to meet the needs of the participants in their respective communities.

Through hands-on activities covering soil mixtures, container gardening, and basic hydroponic systems, the participants gained practical insights into sustainable farming practices.

Barangay Chairpersons of the said barangays graced the activities, extending a warm welcome to the participants and encouraging them to apply the knowledge gained from the seminar.

To start their UA endeavors within their respective communities, the participants were provided with starter kits, including vegetable seeds and seedlings of herbs and lettuce from ATI-MIMAROPA and its partner Learning Site for Agriculture.

This initiative supports the implementation of the National Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture Program (NUPAP) to ensure continuous food production in both rural and urban communities, guaranteeing food security, accessibility, and stabilizing food prices.

Hands-On Learning: 60 Agri-Enthusiasts Learn Hydroponics

Roseanne D. Nilo

A total of 60 agricultural extension workers, farmers, students and agricultural enthusiasts successfully completed two batches of the three-day "Training on Urban Agriculture through Soilless Crop Production" on March 19-21, 2024 at Hotel Marinduque, Boac, Marinduque and on April 16-18, 2024 at Gabutero Organic Farm, Brgy. Labonan, Bongabong, Oriental Mindoro.

Through lectures by Ms. Roseanne Nilo, National Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture Program (NUPAP) Point Person, and Engr. Karen T. Vicente, NUPAP Alternate Point Person from the Agricultural Training Institute in MIMAROPA, the participants learned the basic concepts of hydroponics technology and the differences between traditional gardening and soilless crop production.

Hands-on activities, such as the sterilization of inert media and seed sowing practices necessary for hydroponic setups, enhanced the participants' learning experience.



Experiential learning on different types of hydroponics was held at Blake's Agritourism Techno Farm, owned by Mr. Carl De Guzman, a certified Learning Site for Agriculture (LSA) in Brgy. San Mariano, Roxas, Oriental Mindoro. During this activity, the participants had firsthand exposure to different hydroponic systems in the LSA.

During the tour, Mr. Carl De Guzman shared valuable insights into the operational framework of his farm, demonstrating various controls crucial for farm management. He also emphasized the feasibility of hydroponic farming as a sustainable agricultural method and encouraged its adoption.

To start their hydroponic projects, each attendee received starter kits, which included styroboxes, nutrient solutions, vegetable seeds, and coco peat.

Training of Trainers Empowers Rice Farmers in Oriental Mindoro

Alea Joy G. Gaco

A ten-day Training of Trainers (TOT) on Production of High-Quality Inbred Rice, Seed Certification, and Farm Mechanization concluded on March 1, 2024 at the Agricultural Training Institute in MIMAROPA, Barcenaga, Naujan, Oriental Mindoro. It had a total of 30 graduates, including farmer leaders and Learning Site for Agriculture (LSA) cooperators/representatives from different clusters in the province.

During the training, participants were equipped with the expertise needed to produce high-quality inbred rice varieties and certified seeds through the concept of the Palaycheck System. They also completed many practical tasks such as Agro-Ecosystem Analysis (AESA), seed testing, operation of farm machines, farm planning and budgeting, and setting up MOET.

One highlight of the training was a microteaching activity designed to assess participants' understanding of the course material and improve their presentation and facilitation skills.

Moreover, the participants prepared re-entry plans for what they would do next after completing the training. These plans outlined their actions to ensure they apply what they learned in the training within their communities.

"Marami po akong natutunan tungkol sa training na ito, lalo na sa pagpapalayan. Napakasaya ko po dahil sa mga hands-on activities tulad ng operasyon ng farm machinery at AESA. Gagamitin ko po ang aking natutunan at iaaply sa aking farm" shared by Mr. Emmanuel Espayos of Green Gate Nature Farm in Palawan.



The training that started on February 19, 2024 received positive feedback and appreciation from the participants who are expected to implement the Modified Season Long Farmer Field School in their respective localities.



Refreshing TOT Graduates' Knowledge and Skills in High-Quality Rice Production

Myra Flor T. Magnaye



Aiming to produce competent Resource Persons and Facilitators in the conduct of Modified Farmer Field School, 23 Training of Trainer (TOT) graduates underwent a "Refresher Course on the Production of High-Quality Inbred Rice, Seed Certification, and Farm Mechanization" on March 18-22, 2024, at the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) MIMAROPA, Barcenaga, Naujan, Oriental Mindoro.

The five-day training updated the knowledge and skills of the TOT graduates in sustainable farming technologies and practices. It covered various topics, including the PalayCheck System, Nutrient Management, Pest Management, Conducting FFS and Final Analysis, an overview of Digital Agriculture Courses, Climate Change, and Climate-Smart Agriculture.

For their hands-on activity, they successfully conducted field evaluation and diagnosis at the Oriental Mindoro Agricultural Experiment Station in Alcate, Victoria, Oriental Mindoro, presenting their recommendations as the output.

To ensure that they effectively reinforce their learnings to the farmer-beneficiaries in their respective farm schools, they prepared and submitted re-entry plans upon completing the training.

Ms. Cristina G. Magnaye, Training Specialist III, graced the closing program of the training. "Learning is a continuous process. You are already blooming, and we look forward to your continued growth and the spread of your fragrance to our stakeholders," she shared.

Mr. Felimon Suklinyom of Hiraya Farm in Gloria, Oriental Mindoro, speaking on behalf of the participants, expressed appreciation for the quality of the training.

"Nagpapasalamat ako at masaya na isa ako sa mga nakadalo muli sa pagsasanay ng ATI. Nare-refresh rin ako at nadagdagan ng mga bagong kaalaman sa pagsasaka. Sa mga bagong kasamahan ko, sa napakagandang kombinasyon ng ating samahan, marami rin akong natutunan mula sa inyo. Sa mga nag-conduct ng pagsasanay na ito, nagpapasalamat din ako sa maayos na pagpapadaloy nito," he said.



ATI MIMAROPA Prepares Farm School Facilitators for Digital Tools

Erlan D. Pasana

To capacitate and prepare farm schools and facilitators to implement digital literacy training for farmers in their communities, the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) in MIMAROPA conducted two batches of "Training of Trainers (TOT) on Digital Agriculture Course (DAC)" on April 2-4, 2024 at the ATI MIMAROPA, Barcenaga, Naujan, Oriental Mindoro, and on April 16-18, 2024 at the Adventure Camp Beach Resort, Sablayan.

Assistant Center Director Norberto C. Maur showed strong support for the TOT by gracing the opening program. In his message, he reminded the participants to learn the modules of the training by heart so that they could teach them to the farmers in their respective farming schools.

"Ang magiting na tagapagsanay ay nabubuo sa pamamagitan ng karanasan. Kapag ang paglilingkod ay nagmumula sa puso, laging masaya tayo kapag nagtuturo sa ating mga magsasaka. Subukan nating aralin ang lahat ng aplikasyon na may kaugnayan sa agrikultura upang mabilis din nating maihahatid ito sa mga magsasakang nagpapalayan," he said.

On the first day, the participants improved their knowledge about the use of smartphones, accessing the internet, and utilizing various web-based ICT tools such as the e-learning platform, the Pinoy Rice Knowledge Bank, and agricultural helplines such as the PhilRice Text Center and Farmers Contact Center.

On the second day, they learned about advanced agricultural applications such as the Binhing Palay App, Rice Crop Manager, Minus One Element Technique, e-Damuhan, and Leaf Color Computing App. They also gained knowledge on topics related to advanced social media marketing, particularly on how to create social media content using Canva, develop a social media marketing plan, utilize e-commerce platforms such as Facebook Page, Lazada, and Shopee, and use online/digital transactions through Maya and GCash.

Besides the lecture-discussions, the 51 participants further deepened their comprehension of the lessons covered in DAC for RCEF 101 and 102 through a micro-teaching session on the third day. They also submitted an action plan to conduct the same training for rice farmers.



"Ang pinakamahalagang agri-apps para sa akin ay ang Binhing Palay App at e-Damuhan. Ito ay ituturo ko sa aking mga kasamahan sa farm school. Natuto rin ako sa mga suhestiyon ng panelist during the micro-teaching session upang maituro nang maayos ang mga ICT tools," shared Victoria V. Almendral, Trainor from KLM Farm.

Led by the Information Services Section, Mr. Erlan D. Pasana, Information Officer II; Engr. Karen T. Vicente, Agriculturist I; Mr. Michael Daven T. Jugno, Technical Support Staff III; Mr. John Eric V. Arguelles, Technical Support Staff II; and Ms. Alea Joy G. Gaco, Technical Support Staff I served as resource speakers during the three-day TOT.

Ensuring Quality: ATI MIMAROPA Equips Seed Inspectors in Inbred Rice Seed Production and Certification

Alea Joy G. Gaco



The Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) in MIMAROPA conducted the "Training on Inbred Rice Seed Production and Certification for Deputized and Designated Seed Inspectors" on April 16-18, 2024 at ATI-MIMAROPA, Barcenaga, Naujan, Oriental Mindoro.

During the training, participants were re-oriented to the mechanics, policies, and guidelines on seed certification for inbred rice seed production, as well as their responsibilities as seed inspectors. It also enhanced their capability to efficiently carry out their responsibilities and provide technical assistance to seed growers.

The highlight of the training was the hands-on demonstration for participants on seed testing methods, procedures, and laboratory standards. During the actual activities, they experienced conducting various tests, including Moisture Content Determination, Physical Purity Test, Germination Test, and Varietal Purity Test, which equipped them with the necessary skills to accurately uphold the highest standards in seed quality assessment.

On behalf of the participant, Mr. Abner Juanerio, Seed Inspector from Brookes Point, Palawan expressed his appreciation for the overall quality of the training.

"Gusto ko pong pasalamatan ang ATI sa walang-sawang at walang-pagod na pagbibigay sa amin ng mataas na kalidad na pagsasanay, tulad ng Training on Inbred Rice Seed Production and Certification para sa mga Deputized at Designated Seed Inspectors. Dahil sa mga paksa na tinalakay sa pagsasanay na ito, kami ay nagkaroon ng dagdag na kaalaman bilang mga seed inspectors. Kami ay lubos na nagpapasalamat sa mga staff at sa lahat ng bumubuo ng pagsasanay na ito dahil sa kanilang napakamaayos na pakikitungo at pag-aalaga sa amin," he shared.

In partnership with the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) and BPI-National Seed Quality Control Services in Oriental Mindoro, the three-day training led by Ms. Marilyn G. Gonda, Training Specialist II/RCEF Point Person of ATI MIMAROPA, graduated a total of 15 Agricultural Extension Workers from the provinces of Palawan, Oriental Mindoro, and Occidental Mindoro.



Empowering Future Seed Growers: 35 Farmers Complete Inbred Rice Seed Production Training in Palawan

Erlan D. Pasana

To enable and develop prospective farmers to become accredited seed growers, 35 farmers and extension workers completed the five-day "Training on Inbred Rice Seed Production and Certification for Potential Seed Growers" on May 13-17, 2024 at Ala Amid Bed and Breakfast, Puerto Princesa City, Palawan.

The training covered discussions about the status of the rice industry in the MIMAROPA region and different cultural management practices of inbred rice seed production and integrated pest management.

Participants were also engaged in hands-on activities, including comprehensive seed testing in laboratory conditions. This involved conducting essential tests such as Moisture Content Determination, Physical Purity, Varietal Purity, and Germination, ensuring a thorough understanding and application of seed quality standards.

Ms. Alfie C. Braganza, one of the participants, expressed gratitude for the opportunity, emphasizing the valuable practical knowledge shared and the conducive learning environment provided throughout the training.

"Naging maayos at masaya ang buong training na ito, lalo na't nagkaroon rin ng iba't ibang hands-on activities tungkol sa mga pamamaraan ng Seed Testing na isinagawa ng BPI-NSQCS. Nagpapasalamat rin po ako sa mga naging tagapagturo sa amin at sa kanilang pagbahagi ng kaalaman tungkol sa pagpapalay," she said.



The training concluded with practical assistance on how to handle forms for future seed certification applications, equipping participants with the necessary tools to pursue accreditation as seed growers.

Capacitating Coco Leaders: Training Management Course Graduates 21 Participants

Alea Joy G. Gaco



The "Training Management Course for Coco Leaders" conducted on April 22-26, 2024 at the Convention Hall, Brooke's Point, Palawan concluded with the graduation of 21 participants, comprising extension workers and farmers.

This five-day training equipped the participants with invaluable skills essential for effective training facilitation. Despite holding leadership roles in their communities, many had little to no prior experience in conducting or facilitating training sessions. It also helped them overcome their fear of public speaking and boosted their confidence to become effective trainers.

During the training, Ms. Cristina G. Magnaye, Training Specialist III/Chief of the Career Development and Management Section, together with Engr. Cheri Dawn F. Falogme, Media Production Specialist II of the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) in MIMAROPA guided the participants to learn the series of steps required before, during, and after conducting training or seminars.

Moreover, through their lecture-discussion, the participants understood the importance of need identification in designing any training program, as well as the traits of adult learners and the characteristics of effective trainers.

To enhance the participants' learning experience, they engaged in individual activities. Drafting a training design was particularly challenging for most of them, as it was their first experience with such a task. In addition, they were also given take-home activities to ensure that they could apply the concepts they learned.

A key highlight was the ten-minute micro-teaching activity which enabled participants to practice their presentation skills. On the last day, they prepared and submitted feasible re-entry plans which will be monitored in November 2024.

Ms. Wendy C. Dimaala, one of the participants from Puerto Princesa City, expressed her gratitude to ATI for conducting such training. She said that this training has been an eye-opener for her, realizing that even farmers can conduct training sessions.



"Sa totoo lang po, mahirap tumayo sa harapan kapag hindi ka sanay, pero dahil kailangan mong gawin at kailangan mong matuto, kailangan mong tumayo sa harapan. Katunayan, nahirapan ako sa training design pero narealize ko po na pag walang challenge, walang growth, at hindi ka magro-grow kung hindi ka maghihirap at mag-endure," Ms. Dimaala added.

Recalibrate to Empower: Consultative Activities on Training Needs of Coconut Farmers

Cheri Daw F. Falogme

The Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) is steadfast in its mission to uplift the lives of coconut farmers through the Coconut Farmers Industry Development Plan (CFIDP). As a key player under the Social Protection Component, ATI continues to deliver top-notch services aimed at enhancing farmers' livelihoods and improving their overall quality of life.

In line with recommendations from the Philippine Council for Agriculture and Fishery (PCAF) Sectoral Council on Coconut, ATI's network of centers, including ATI-MIMAROPA, conducted a comprehensive Training Needs Assessment (TNA) in December 2023. The objective was to pinpoint the top five training needs within the region.

To ensure the reliability of the collected data, ATI implemented a two-level TNA Validation Process. This thorough approach, carried out in March - May 2024 in collaboration with the Philippine Coconut Authority Office, involved five TNA Validation Level 1, four TNA Validation Level 2, and one regional TNA Validation.

The initial TNA results were presented during the TNA Validation Level 1 meetings, attended by key stakeholders such as the Provincial Agriculture and Fishery Council, the Municipal Agriculture and Fishery Council, Learning Site for Agriculture Cooperators, and representatives from Coconut Farmers' Cooperatives and Associations. These sessions focused on the prioritization of training needs within each province, during which the top five training needs were presented.

The subsequent TNA Validation Level 2 sessions included participation from various implementing agencies, including DA-RFO MIMAROPA, TESDA, PhilMech, DOST, DTI, NDA, BAI, PCIC, CDA, DPWH, as well as other stakeholders like the Regional Agriculture and Fishery Council, Provincial Agriculture and Veterinary Offices, and Municipal Agriculture Offices. This phase aimed to prioritize training needs that aligned with the programs and interventions from these agencies to be included in the proposed work and financial plan for the coming years.

The TNA Validation results revealed that Coconut Production emerged as the most crucial training need across most provinces. This training will be complemented by Good Agricultural Practices to ensure sustainable and high-quality farming. Other significant training needs identified include:

- Farm Diversification
- Coconut Processing (Food and Non-Food Products)
- Shared Processing Facility-related Trainings
- Farm Management with Financial Literacy



From Wandering to Farming: How a Certified Tourism Professional turned Farmer Extensionist

Alea Joy G. Gaco



Born on August 16, 1992, Ms. Azzil Vancere M. Cantos is a 31-year-old Farm Administrator of the Revitalizing Agri-Tourism Vocational Training Center, a farm ray of hope and innovation located in Barangay Proper Bansud, Bansud, Oriental Mindoro.

As the eldest among her five siblings, she shoulders the weight of responsibility with grace and determination. It is through her strong dedication that she guides her family towards a bright future, where each sunrise brings with it the opportunity for everyone. Rice farming is not only the primary source of their income but also the lifeline that puts food on their table. Her family runs deep within the land itself, with her father owning one (1) hectare of land, adjacent to which are another two (2) hectares of rice fields.

Since childhood, she has been barred by her father from participating in farm work.

“Naaalala ko noong minsang sumama ako sa pagtatalok. Pagkauwi ko sa bahay, nagalit si tatay at pinalo niya ako. Pagkatapos nun, ipinaliwanag niya na ang kanyang pagsusumikap sa pagbubukid ay para sa aming ikabubuhay, upang mabigyan kami ng maayos na edukasyon, at upang hindi namin maranasan ang hirap na kanyang pinagdaraan.”

This incident served as a profound eye-opener for her, which ignited a fierce determination to improve the lives of her family. When she was in high school, her parents eventually stopped farming as both sought employment opportunities abroad. This caused to leave the family's farm sorely neglected. Meanwhile, she studied college in the urban part of Mindoro and pursued her degree in Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management. After she graduated, she worked as a Tourism Instructor at Mindoro State University for six (6) years.

Her Journey into Farming

"Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised", Ms. Cantos shared.

As a farm tourism instructor, her advocacy is to have a harmonious combination of agriculture and tourism. She believes that farming is not just a place of productivity but also living canvases of natural beauty and artistry. She knows that by sharing her passion for farming with others, she can sow the seeds of curiosity and appreciation for farmers.

However, her enthusiasm for farming was hindered by the demands of her occupation. Despite this, she remained determined to pursue her passion for farming. She initiated the utilization of her father's farm to start her agricultural venture. Her father agreed to the proposition and offered support for her aspirations.

She took the first step by introducing pigs to the farm and started their farming enterprise. Then, she introduced the Rhode Island Red chickens along with an incubator to facilitate the breeding and multiplication of their poultry stock. Leveraging her experience, she ensured the success of their farm operations.

As she was very eager to acquire new skills, she sought knowledge and capability enhancement through the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) – MIMAROPA. She immersed herself in numerous trainings provided by ATI to revive her family farm. She attended a series of trainings under the Rice Competitive Enhancement Fund (RCEF) Program, such as Training of Trainers (TOT) on High-Quality Inbred Rice Seed Production and Rice-based Farm Machinery Operations, as well as TOT on Digital Agriculture Course (DAC) for RCEF. She yearned to translate her newfound expertise into a successful agricultural business venture.

As their farming activities gained momentum, they set their sights in formalizing their involvement with the RCEF Program. On November 21, 2022, their efforts bore fruit when ATI conducted a site visitation and approved her farm to be one of the Learning Sites for Agriculture (LSA) under the RCEF. It indeed marked a significant milestone in their farming journey and opened the doors to further support their resources.

She poured her efforts into improving the farm, and her vision expanded to include the idea of establishing a farm school. She believed that her growing knowledge could merge seamlessly with her ambitious aspirations.

She sought guidance, reached out to various farm owners, and consulted with farm experts to gain insights into the farming systems or approaches she wished to adopt. On December 12, 2022, her farm became a farm school accredited by the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA). The farm, named Revitalizing Agri-Tourism Vocational Training Center was inspired by their family's initial names: "RAV" which stands for Ramon, Analiza, and Vancere. As the farm embraced its new role, it cultivated not only crops but also cultivated minds, nurturing a new generation of skilled farmers.

In 2023, she made a crucial decision to leave her job as Tourism Instructor and pursue the development of her farm. It became increasingly evident to her that the potential for profit outside of traditional employment and freelance work far surpassed what she could achieve.



Breaking Barriers to Overcome Challenges

"Ang buhay ay tulad ng isang hagdanan. Kailangan mongdaanan ang lahat ng proseso upang marating ang pinakamatamis na tagumpay," Ms. Cantos said.

She was confronted by the challenge of the African Swine Fever, a devastating blow that left her facing the grim reality of losing her entire swine herd. The outbreak continued until almost all of her poultry stocks were lost as well. She began to face financial strain that jeopardized the stability of her farm.

Her father's declining health also posed a significant obstacle to their financial stability. Rather than focusing on initial farm development, her priority shifted towards ensuring her father received the necessary medical care and attention. Consequently, it was redirected to prioritize the well-being of her family over anything else.

Another challenge was the firm adherence of older farmers to traditional practices and beliefs. They were often resistant to the integration of modern farm technologies. It took her time and effort to persuade them to accept and learn the new methods and equipment for farming.

However, she insisted that she did not merely view these challenges as obstacles to be avoided. Instead, she chose to perceive them as opportunities for growth and development.

"Mahirap magturo ng pagsasaka kung nakikita nilang hindi mo pinapractice ang itinuturo mo. Kaya kung dati, lipstick at foundation ang hawak ko, ngayon leaf color chart at MOET kit na ang kaagapay ko sa pagtuturo," she proudly shared.

Effective Strategies and Approaches for Navigating Farmer-Student Learning

It is important to gain knowledge on how to properly manage students. She deliberately avoids wearing formal clothing, opting instead for fieldwork attire. This is because she knows that formal clothing frequently intimidates farmers, and she wants to create an atmosphere of mutual respect and approachability.

Moreover, she understands that language can be a barrier to good communication. Therefore, she avoids using technical English terms when speaking to her students. She ensures that the modules or subjects are understandable by using the mother tongue and breaking down the ideas into simpler terms for a deeper exchange of thoughts.

But perhaps her most valuable quality was her ability to relate to people. She made an effort to build relationships with her students by being kind and sympathetic. Her aim was to allay any fears or discomfort through these exchanges, building a bond and trust that went beyond the conventional teacher-student relationship. By doing this, she fostered a friendly environment where learning thrived and her students felt appreciated, valued, and equipped to take on new information and skills in farming.

Through her hard work and perseverance, she was awarded and recognized as a Certified Tourism Professional, an Exceptional Professional Educator, and the Compassionate Trainer of the Year.

Mapping Out Her Future Plans

She sees her farm school and learning site not merely as a traditional educational establishment, but as a dynamic learning hub and a site for broader educational experiences. She envisions a farm-to-table market that offers fresh produce directly sourced from its own farm. Adjacent to it stands a restaurant whose menu proudly boasts dishes crafted solely from ingredients cultivated on the farm.

She also sees this as a "trading post", a bustling marketplace where the diverse products of her community find a common stage. Here, farmers and other people will converge to showcase their goods and products.

Moreover, she commits to maintaining active engagement with the ATI. She will steadfastly uphold her dedication to nurturing the next generation of agri-youth and ensuring that the legacy of sustainable farming endures for generations to come.

"Lumisan man ang aming Tatay, maiiwan niya ang kanyang legacy sa pamamagitan ng RAV. Kaming magkakapatid ay committed na ipagpatuloy ang aming naumpisahan. Sa bawat sulok ng farm na ito, nakikita ko ang sakripisyo ng aming Tatay at nararamdaman kong proud siya sa amin," she shared.

Capacitating Marinduque's Coconut Farmers Through Native Chicken Integration

Richard R. Templo



To capacitate coconut farmers in the province of Marinduque on coconut farm integration, the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) in MIMAROPA successfully conducted a Farmer-Level Training on Native Chicken Production from March 19-22, 2024, with 22 coconut farmer graduates at the Municipal Hall, Torrijos, Marinduque.

Throughout the training, the participants gained a thorough understanding of the economic opportunities associated with integrating native chicken production with coconut farming, including the current trends and status of the poultry industry in the Philippines.

They also learned the importance of effective breeding management for improving the quality and productivity of native chickens, utilizing coconut by-products in feed formulation to reduce feed costs and promote sustainability. Moreover, the participants grasped knowledge of appropriate feeds and feeding management techniques for different growth stages of native chickens to ensure optimal nutrition.

Similarly, understanding housing requirements, maintaining basic records, and conducting simple cost analysis are other essential skills that the participants acquired during the training.

The key takeaway of the training was that the participants applied their learnings through the preparation of a comprehensive farm layout integrating native chickens into their existing coconut farm setup, wherein they incorporated elements such as proper spacing, efficient housing, and strategic placement of resources.

With their commitment to providing continuous support to farmers, the ATI-MIMAROPA and its partners from the municipalities of Torrijos and Buenavista are optimistic that the said training will positively impact the province's native chicken industry.





Stingless Bees: Buzzing Partners of Coconut Farmers

Karen T. Vicente

Aiming to improve the coconut productivity and increase the income of the coconut farmers in the region, the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) in MIMAROPA conducted the Farm-Level Training on Beekeeping: Stingless Bee as Coconut Pollinator on March 12-14, 2024 at Dos-Four-Dos Integrated Farm, Brgy. Ramon Magsaysay, Aborlan, Palawan.

Mr. Lee S. Gaitana from PIA's Bee Farm, a certified Learning Site for Agriculture in CALABARZON explained that pollination by stingless bees accounts for a 40-60% increase in coconut yield, as stated in a recent study. Through his discussions and sample video clips, participants acquired the necessary knowledge about the uses of stingless bees and how to transfer them to beehive boxes.

During the hands-on activities held at Rodriguez Integrated Farm, a certified Learning Site for Agriculture in Brgy. Sagpangan, Aborlan, participants also practiced colony splitting, hunted stingless bees using the reduction method, and had the opportunity to harvest honey.

The three-day training spearheaded by ATI-MIMAROPA, in strong partnership with the Philippine Coconut Authority-Palawan, represented by Ms. Noeme Kate Ben-ek and Ms. Paula Ciudad, has graduated 18 coconut farmers registered in the National Coconut Farmers Registry System from Aborlan, Quezon, Puerto Princesa City, and Dumaran, along with two Agricultural Extension Workers from Taytay.



“Ang natutunan ko kay Sir na reduction method ay gagamitin ko na sa aking isa pang uri ng stingless bee. Malaki ang magiging tulong nito sa ating mga magsasaka dahil napakahalaga pala ng mga bees sa ating mga pananim”, said Mr. Aries G. Bajala from the KANIB Community Based Organization, Magbabaon, Aborlan.

Empowering Coconut Farmers Through Value-Added Training

Karen T. Vicente



Aiming to equip coconut farmers with the necessary knowledge and skills for value-addition of coconut, the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) in MIMAROPA, in collaboration with the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA), conducted two batches of three-day "Farmer Level Training on Processing Coconut Food Products" on April 10-12, 2024 in Brooke's Point, Palawan, and May 28-30, 2024 in Oriental Mindoro.

During the training, various crucial aspects of the coconut industry were covered. Engr. Karen T. Vicente, Agriculturist I, and Roseanne D. Nilo, Media Production Specialist II of ATI-MIMAROPA, discussed Good Agricultural Practices on Coconut and outlined opportunities within the coconut industry. They also briefed the participants on the programs offered under the Coconut Farmers and Industry Development Plan, enhancing their understanding of available support mechanisms.

A highlight of the training was the hands-on session on processing coconut food products, facilitated by Ms. Jean Alexa E. Templo, Dormitory Manager II/Technical Staff of ATI MIMAROPA. Participants were guided through the step-by-step procedures of coconut food processing, with an emphasis on adhering to Good Manufacturing Practices standards and protocols.

Site visits to the Virgin Coconut Oil processing site of Brooke's Point Coco Products Producers Cooperative, the Virgin Coconut Oil processing site of Calima Socio-Economic Multi-Purpose Cooperative in Pola, Oriental Mindoro, and the food processing center at the Provincial Agriculture Center in Merit, Victoria, Oriental Mindoro, provided participants with practical insights into coconut processing techniques and technologies, further enriching their learning experience.

COCONUT FARMERS AND INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT PLAN (CFIDP)

In his impression, Mr. Fernando Herher, a Board of Director of the Apurawan Culandanum Kaanib Producers Cooperative in Aborlan, expressed his commitment to share the learnings he gained as he returns to his cooperative.

"Sa totoo lang po marami po kaming farm pero wala pong ibang tanim kundi niyugan lang pero ang alam ko lang po dun ay yung pagtutuba pero tamang pangbahay lang at pagcocopra at ngayon dito ko nalaman at natutunan yung paggagawa burger patty, bukorilyo at coco toyo at dito ko din nalaman na ang coconut tree pala ay walang saying", he added.

Present during the activity were Engr. Noeme Kate Benek and Engr. Celso Maliwanag of PCA; Mr. Norberto C. Maur of ATI-MIMAROPA; and Mr. Krist Joseph Cadlaon, Officer-in-Charge of the Municipal Agriculture Office of Brooke's Point.

A total of 41 registered coconut farmers from the National Coconut Farmers Registry System, endorsed by the PCA, attended the said training.



Hanunuo Tribe of Mangyan Equips with Coconut-Coffee Farming System

Alea Joy G. Gaco

To empower indigenous farmers from the Hanunuo Tribe of Mangyan, the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) in MIMAROPA collaborated with the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Mansalay to conduct a three-day training on the "Coconut-Coffee Farming System" on April 3-5, 2024 at Melzar's Mountain Resort, Brgy. B. Del Mundo, Mansalay, Oriental Mindoro.

The training equipped the participants with essential knowledge and skills related to the Coconut Farmers and Industry Development Program (CFIDP) and efficient management practices for both coconut and coffee farming, including differences in traditional practices in fertilizer management and harvesting.

Led by resource persons Ramil D. Atienza, Ph.D., Associate Professor I of Mindoro State University, and Cristina G. Magnaye, MPM-RD, CFIDP Point Person of ATI-MIMAROPA, the training also covered various aspects, including the basic parts and functions of coconut trees, coffee plant management, and techniques for improving the aroma of coffee beans.

Through hands-on activities focused on plant propagation, the participants were provided with grafted coffee seedlings to enhance their practical learning experience.

Acknowledging the cultural sensitivity of the participants, the training methodology prioritized interactive sessions over written assessments. It encouraged knowledge sharing during wrap-up discussions after each session.

The importance of the training was highlighted by the presence of Hon. Ferdinand M. Maliwanag, Municipal Mayor of Mansalay who expressed unwavering support for the indigenous farmers in the municipality.

During the closing program, Mr. Allan Favila, Community Development Officer from LGU-Mansalay, emphasized the importance of cooperation and encouraged them to seize the opportunities provided by various agencies to enhance their livelihoods while preserving their cultural heritage.



"Sa pagtuturo nila sa amin tungkol sa niyog at kape, nakita ko ang tamang pagkakasunod-sunod ng proseso. Hindi sana namin ito malalaman kung hindi kami nakadalo dito. Sa mga kasama ko na dumalo sa seminar, ang mga aral na ito ay dapat nating isabuhay, yakapin sapagkat nasa atin ang pag-unlad ng susunod na henerasyon,"
shared by Ms. Shelomina C. Ganyuan, a farmer and member of the Hanunuo Tribe.



In his closing message, Mr. Norberto C. Maur, Assistant Center Director of ATI-MIMAROPA, inspired the participants to continue developing their farmlands, citing farming as a means of sustaining education and family needs.

The training was attended by a total of 19 indigenous farmers who had previously received coconut planting materials distributed by the Philippine Coconut Authority.

Tracking Progress: Evaluating Training and Extension Activities in PAFES

Kim Lalaine Cruzat

In a significant move to revitalize and enhance agricultural and fisheries extension services in the MIMAROPA region, the Provincial Agriculture and Fisheries Extension System (PAFES) has undertaken a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation of its pilot provinces. This initiative aims to address the long-standing challenges in agri-fishery extension, including the need for a robust institutional framework to integrate and strengthen services at the provincial level.

On February 14, 2024, a PAFES monitoring team, led by Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) MIMAROPA PAFES Regional Coordinator Mr. Norberto C. Maur, PAFES Focal Person for Marinduque Mr. Jayson N. Erondo, and Technical Support Staff Ms. Kim Lalaine Cruzat, conducted a review at the Provincial Capitol of Marinduque. The team assessed the implementation of the "Capacity Development for Agriculture Extension Workers (AEWs)", which was funded by ATI with Php 1,200,000.00 in June 2023, and a Php 60,000.00 counterpart from the province.



During the activity, Assistant Provincial Agriculturist Ms. Susan A. Uy presented the progress reports and documents related to the funded project, including:

1. Community Organizing and Rural Development (October 5-7, 2023) with 24 AEWs and 19 additional participants.
2. Climate Resilience Agro-Forestry-Industry-Oriented Value Chain Analysis (October 10-12, 2023) with 30 AEWs and 6 others.
3. Agribusiness Entrepreneurship and Development (November 17-18, 2023) with 23 AEWs and 19 others.
4. Values Formation cum Team Building (Expository Tour) (November 17-18, 2023) with 80 participants.
5. Ceremonial MOA Signing for CPAFEP and Management Committee Meeting of MARAFEC (November 27-28, 2023) with 75 participants.

Further follow-up on May 15, 2024, included a review of MARAFEC liquidation by the same monitoring team, with OIC-Accountant Ms. Edna M. Mojica joining them.

In In Occidental Mindoro, a similar activity took place on March 14, 2024. The same monitoring team examined the "Strengthening the Capacity Development for AEWs, Farmers, and Fisherfolks" program, which was funded with Php 1,200,000.00 in November 2023.

The Province of Occidental Mindoro conducted the following training:

1. Onion Production Technology with GAP Certification (February 19-23, 2024) with 19 AEWs and 11 farmers.
2. Tuna Processing and Livelihood Support to Tuna Fishers' Families (March 18-22, 2024).
3. Cassava Production Technology (March 12-14, 2024).



Lastly, on May 3, 2024, a monitoring team led by PAFES Focal Person for Oriental Mindoro Mr. Erian D. Pasana, PAFES Alternate Focal Person Ms. Karen T. Vicente, along with Ms. Mojica and Ms. Cruzat, assessed the 'Setting Strategic Directions: Roadmap Development for Priority Commodities' program at the Provincial Capitol of Oriental Mindoro. This project, funded with Php 1,198,000.00 in September 2023, aimed to create strategic roadmaps for key commodity industries, including banana, coconut, onion, bangus, and tilapia.

The following were the Oriental Mindoro's conducted activities:

1. Roadmap Development for Onion Industry (February 20-21, 2024) with 91 participants.
2. Roadmap Development for Banana Industry (January 24-26, 2024) with 62 participants.
3. Roadmap Development for Bangus and Tilapia Industry (November 22-24, 2023) with 60 participants.
4. Roadmap Development for Coconut Industry (November 8-10, 2023) with 60 participants.

The ongoing efforts of ATI and provincial stakeholders are expected to drive significant progress in the region's agricultural and fisheries sectors.

FYFIPT and YFFLTPJ Boost Opportunities for Young Farmers in MIMAROPA

Erlan D. Pasana

To develop deserving youth into farmer leaders and empowered agricultural entrepreneurs, the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) currently implements two international exchange programs: the Young Filipino Farm Leaders Training Program in Japan (YFFLTPJ) and the Filipino Young Farmers Internship Program in Taiwan (FYFIPT).

The FYFIPT, a partnership between the Manila Economic and Cultural Office (MECO), the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in the Philippines (TECO), and ATI, aims to enhance relations through an internship program for young Filipino farmers. This program focuses on modern agricultural techniques and skills. Meanwhile, the YFFLTPJ, initiated by the Japanese government through the Japan Agricultural Exchange Council (JAEC) and the Japan Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries (MAFF), has been managed by ATI in the Philippines since 1986. It supports agricultural development and rural organizations.



Current and Upcoming Batches of FYFIPT:

Batch 1: Mr. Lemuel Magnaye and Mr. Reinhard Eusebio completed their internships on Sept. 21, 2022, gaining valuable insights into Taiwan's agricultural practices.

Batch 2: Ms. Princess Cyril Pan and Ms. Jessica G. Abante completed their internships on July 14, 2023, where they applied their learning to real-world scenarios.

Batch 3: Ms. Kris Ann Bermudes is currently in Taiwan and is scheduled to return in July 2024 after completing her intensive training period.

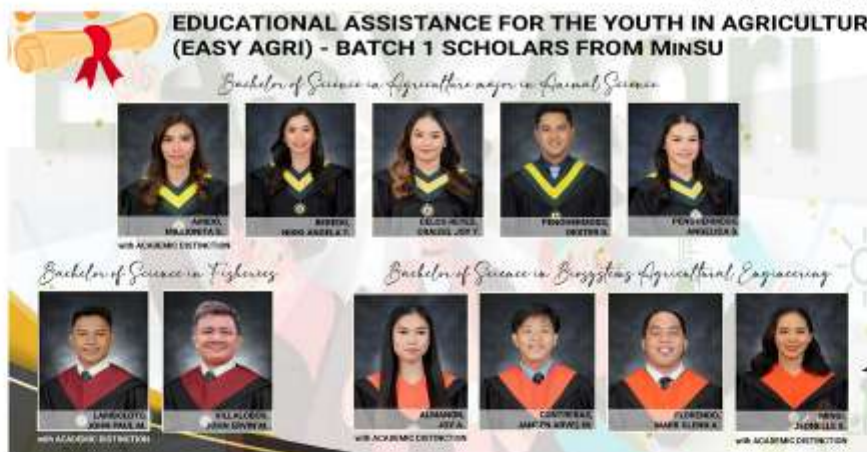
Batch 4: Mr. Joven T. Agting and Mr. Jhomar S. Soriano are preparing for their send-off ceremony on July 11, 2024, before heading to Taiwan for their internships.

Batch 5: Selection is underway, with an orientation, written examination, and field validation set for July 17, 2024. The tentative departure date for this batch is November 2024.

Recent Updates from YFFLTPJ:

- Kim Garbin, a Batch 2023 graduate, returned to the Philippines on February 23, 2024, bringing back valuable knowledge and experience.
- Raffaello Azriel Salibio, a Batch 2024 trainee, departed for Japan on April 12, 2024, to commence his training.

ATI's commitment to supporting these interns extends beyond their time abroad. As of July 1, 2024, a Memorandum from the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture ensures that graduate interns will receive assistance and support, including inputs and other resources, to help them apply their newfound knowledge effectively.



ATI-MIMAROPA Recognizes EAsY Agri- Batch 1 Scholars

Erlan D. Pasana

The Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) in MIMAROPA recognized the achievements of the 11 Educational Assistance for Youth (EAsY) in Agriculture Batch 1 Scholars, who completed their degrees in agriculture and agriculture-related courses on June 24-25, 2024, from Mindoro State University (MinSU) Main Campus and Bongabong Campus.

The graduates who completed their studies in various agricultural disciplines include:

Bachelor of Science in Agriculture - Major in Animal Science

1. Amido, Millionita
2. Beredo, Nikki Angella
3. Delos Reyes, Craizel Joy
4. Penohermoso, Angelica
5. Penohermoso, Dexter

Bachelor of Science in Agriculture and Biosystems Engineering

1. Almanon, Joy
2. Conteras, Jansen Arvel
3. Florendo, Mark Glenn
4. Mingi, Jeonelle

Bachelor of Science in Fisheries

1. Lamboloto, John Paul
2. Villalobos, John Ervin

Among these distinguished scholars, five received Recognition for Academic Distinction, showcasing their dedication and excellence in their respective fields.

In addition to the recognized scholars from MinSU, two more EAsY Agri- Batch 1 Scholars from Marinduque State College Torrijos Campus will graduate on July 18, 2024.

As the EAsY Agri program continues, Batch 2 and Batch 3 scholars are currently enrolled in various state universities and colleges:

EAsY Agri-Batch 2

- 4 at Occidental Mindoro State College (OMSC)
- 1 at Batangas State University (BSU)
- 2 at Romblon State University (RSU)
- 2 at Palawan State University (PSU)
- 1 at Marinduque State College (MSC)
- 1 at Western Philippines University (WPU)
- 3 at Mindoro State University (MinSU)

EAsY Agri-Batch 3

- 4 at Romblon State University (RSU)
- 4 at Marinduque State College (MSC)
- 2 at Mindoro State University (MinSU)
- 1 at Occidental Mindoro State College (OMSC)

The program aims to create more professionals in the agricultural sector and further professionalize the field. Its continuous implementation is expected to contribute significantly to the development of agriculture in the region.



ATI Expands EdGE Scholarship Program for Enhanced Career Development

Erlan D. Pasana

As part of its ongoing commitment to empower its extension workers and support their career development, the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) has expanded its scholarship offerings through the Educational Grants for Extension Workers (EdGE) program. This initiative aims to produce a pool of highly qualified and competitive professionals ready to serve the agri-fishery sector.

The EdGE Scholarship Program specifically targets deserving Agricultural Extension Workers from the Department of Agriculture, State Universities and Colleges, and Local Government Units. It also intends to develop a pool of community management professionals and subject matter specialists on social and production technologies through the provision of degree scholarships.



In ATI-MIMAROPA, the scholarship program, which started in 2022 includes four scholars: one pursuing a doctoral degree, two receiving full master's scholarships, and one awarded a partial master's scholarship, as follows:

- Maria Teresa B. Carido Doctor in Public Administration
- Yehlen Joy Q. Mirallo Master in Public Administration
- Jommel S. Quiamco Master in Horticulture
- Kenneth M. Panganiban Master in Public Administration

The program has approved an extension request for two scholars to complete their Master of Public Administration at Western Philippine University. This extension, from the initial two academic years to three (AY 2022-2023 to AY 2024-2025), was granted without any additional funding for the completion of their degrees.



Empowering the Youth of MIMAROPA on OA through an Internship Program

Karen T. Vicente



In a dynamic step towards promoting sustainable farming, the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) in MIMAROPA has proudly announced the successful completion of its first batch of the Youth Internship Program on Organic Agriculture (YIPOA). This innovative initiative aims to cultivate a new generation of organic farmers by combining education, hands-on training, and financial support.

Through this program, the participants shall undergo a 21-month internship program that comprises nine-month schooling and on-site training with the farm partners and a 12-month hands-on practice and implementation of the proposed organic enterprise. Part of the internship grants provided to the young participants will be start-up support and mentoring for the implementation of their business plan to empower them to become organic farmers and practitioners.

Continuation of Empowering the Youth of MIMAROPA on OA through an Internship Program

For YIPOA Batch 1, the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) in MIMAROPA recognized the ten grantees, along with the five farm partners who served as trainers for the interns, in November 2023. The grantees were also awarded startup capital of PHP 150,000 to help them implement their approved business enterprises.

Successful interns who are now implementing their business enterprises are the following:

- Claire S. Balderas
- Angel S. Bolaños
- Sue M. Alicpala
- Mary Joy A. Anyayahan
- Jessie An E. Escultor
- Jhomar A. Pacaldo
- Eva Cris T. Mabuhay
- Gerome A. Baluntong
- Mariano A. Supetran
- Frances G. Supetran
- Vermicomposting, Native Chicken, and Black Soldier Fly Production
- Vegetable, Vermicomposting, Black Soldier Fly
- Backyard Cattle Fattening with Vegetable Garden and Vermiculture Production
- Broiler Chicken, Vermicomposting, Vegetables, and Duck Raising
- Goat, Vermicomposting, and Organic Vegetables Production
- Piggery and Free-range Brown Chicken Eggs, Organic vegetable
- Natural Egg Production
- Organic Vegetable Production, Free-range Chicken, Vermicomposting
- Organic Vegetable Production, Ready-to-lay Chicken Raising
- Organic Vegetable Production, Goat, Vermicomposting



Building on this success, the program is now in its second phase. On June 7, 2024, ATI-MIMAROPA conducted an orientation and pre-deployment session for the new batch of interns. This session, held both in-person and online, introduced the interns to their roles and farm partners. The orientation was followed by a two-week pre-internship program to ensure compatibility between the interns and their respective farm partners.

The official Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signing for this batch took place on June 25, 2024 at ATI-MIMAROPA, Barcenaga, Naujan, Oriental Mindoro. Attendees included Ms. Karen T. Vicente, OA Point Person, Ms. Edna M. Mojica, OIC-Accountant, and Mr. Pat Andrew B. Barrientos, Center Director of ATI-MIMAROPA.

The following are the ten interns who are currently deployed on their respective farm partner:

- Gleene M. Torres
- Teodulfo L. Buñag
- Ronna Mae R. Frias
- Marilyn B. Mazon
- Rhea Jane N. Atonducan
- Eric D. Jalbuena
- Ronie O. Pangan
- Bernard C. Martinez
- Ricky Angelo M. Jalimbaw
- Aaron C. Bravo





A total of 20 differently-abled persons in Occidental Mindoro received starter kits, such as vegetable seeds and farm tools after attending the one-day "Seminar on Backyard Vegetable Farming" on March 5, 2024 at Lola's Healthy Farm Inc., Poblacion, Magsaysay, Occidental Mindoro.

Mr. Randy V. Balderas, an expert in vegetable production, served as the resource speaker during the activity. Through his lecture, the participants learned about the principles, types, and practices of backyard vegetable farming. The seminar also provided them with a thorough overview of farming methods for maximizing yield while minimizing labor, using efficient practices such as capillary irrigation and Isang Dipang Gulayan.

Moreover, participants actively engaged in hands-on activities, acquiring practical skills in container gardening. Additionally, they gained knowledge about bio-fertilizers and pesticides based on organic foliar fertilizers, promoting sustainable and eco-friendly farming methods.

"Ako po ay lubos na natutuwa sa ganitong seminar dahil ako'y taga-isla. Tuwing tag-init lamang po kami nakakapagtanim, ngunit sa pamamagitan ng pagsasanay na ito, marami akong natutunan. Sana'y magamit ko ng maayos ang aking mga natutunan at maipamahagi sa iba ang aking kaalaman tungkol sa Backyard Vegetable Farming. Sana matulungan din kami ng munisipyo at mabigyan ng mga kagamitan para masimulan ang aming hardin," Ms. Maricel G. Donalbo said.

Empowering Differently Abled Persons with Technical Skills and Farm Inputs

Erian D. Pasana

Expressing their support, the Municipal Social Welfare Development Office of Magsaysay commended the initiative of the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) in MIMAROPA and committed to continued assistance for the participants of the seminar.

The ATI MIMAROPA expressed hope that the provided starter kits would encourage the participants to embark on successful backyard vegetable farming ventures.



The Buhid Farmers Association Engages in a Product Development Seminar

Erlan D. Pasana

Enhancing their agricultural practices and venturing into profitable businesses, the Buhid Farmers Association in Brgy. Batangan actively participated in the one-day "Seminar on Product Development" on March 21, 2024 in Bongabong, Oriental Mindoro.

Through lectures, discussions, sharing of best practices, and hands-on activities facilitated by Mr. Randy Balderas, the Resource Speaker, the said indigenous peoples' organization learned about the importance of value addition and good manufacturing practices during the seminar.

Mr. Balderas shared all his expertise in product development and marketing, especially focusing on the processing of ginger, turmeric, sweet potato, chili, and taro. Also, he discussed product costing and explained how to compute the return on investment.



Moreover, Mr. Mark Buñag, Project Officer, assisted the participants in completing their Business Model Canvas. This will guide them in preparing and finalizing their business plan.

At the end of the activity, 21 participants received starter kits from the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) MIMAROPA to begin adding value to their products within the community.

This seminar was made possible by ATI MIMAROPA in partnership with the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples – MIMAROPA.



"Kami po ay nagpapasalamat kay Sir Randy Balderas, aming tagapagturo, sa maraming bagay na natutunan namin sa kanya. Ganun din po sa NCIP na nagbibigay sa amin ng mga programa. Nagpapasalamat din po kami sa ATI dahil sa seminar na kanilang ibinigay sa amin. Nais po naming isabuhay ang mga ito upang magkaroon kami ng mataas na kita. Ako rin po ay susubok na gamitin ang aking natutunan para hindi ito masayang," Mr. Jeson Musico said.



Supporting Elderly Through Cacao Enterprise Seminar

Erlan D. Pasana



To ensure that senior citizens are not overlooked in agricultural initiatives and to provide them with alternative means of livelihood, the Agricultural Training Institute in MIMAROPA conducted a one-day "Seminar on Cacao Enterprise Development" at the Municipal Hall, Bayanan, Pola, Oriental Mindoro on March 14, 2024.



Center Director Pat Andrew B. Bariantos graced the opening program of the activity. In his message, he emphasized the benefits and market opportunities available in cacao production and processing. Moreover, he provided information on how to avail themselves of government services for their startup capital to engage in the cacao industry.

Also present during the activity were Mr. Meynard Acalan, Municipal Administrator; Ms. Seliena L. Fabula, Acting Municipal Agriculturist; and Mr. Reymond Mendoza of the Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office, signifying their support for the activity.



Throughout the seminar, Ms. Anita Pagcaliwagan, the Resource Speaker, provided the participants with an overview of the present state of the cacao industry in the Philippines. She also informed them about the different cacao varieties, highlighting the steps and processes involved in producing cacao-based products.

To encourage the participants to try cacao product processing, Ms. Pagcaliwagan demonstrated how to process tablea. Moreover, she showed them samples of other cacao products, such as cacao nibs and cocoa powder, explaining their potential for value addition.

Nakakakuha kami ng maraming kapaki-pakinabang na mga ideya na maaari naming gawing negosyo para makatulong sa mga senior citizens dito sa aming lugar, Kahit na kami ay matatanda na, patuloy pa rin kaming magiging produktibo sa pamamagitan ng mga alternatibong paraan ng pagkakakitaan tulad ng pagproseso ng mga produkto mula sa cacao," Mr. Jaime L. Corella shared.

A total of 20 senior citizens attended the said activity.



Empowering Differently-abled Persons: Training Course on Duck Raising and Enterprise Development

Erlan D. Pasana

The three-day "Training Course on Duck Raising and Enterprise Development" held in Brgy. Sugod from April 16-18, 2024 has left a lasting impact on the 22 differently-abled persons in Cajiodican, Romblon.

The training started with a lecture on the fundamentals of the duck industry, delivered by Mr. Nelson S. Gabutero. Drawing from his extensive experience in duck farming and salted egg marketing, he highlighted the profitability of duck raising.

Participants also learned unconventional methods of duck raising and management, particularly focusing on different duck breeds, their physiology, and basic care. Mr. Gabutero further shared his feed formula aimed at minimizing costs and maximizing returns on investments for duck farmers.

Moreover, the participants understood pest and disease management specific to ducks and knew the benefits of Black Soldier Fly production, offering a sustainable solution to complement the duck's feeding requirements.

A highlight of the training was the hands-on activities, during which participants gained practical experience in processing duck eggs. From making salted eggs to understanding procedures in balut production, attendees were guided through each step by Mr. Gabutero.

In showing his support, Mayor Marvin R. Ramos pledged Php100,000.00 in livelihood assistance for the group of PWD participants to start duck raising. Mr. Nelson Delgado, PDAO Focal Person, also expressed gratitude to the Agricultural Training Institute in MIMAROPA for conducting the training and committed to establishing facilities solely for duck raising and salted egg processing.

Reflecting on the experience, Ms. Gelena R. Magallan, one of the participants, expressed her eagerness to apply her learnings to her farm. With the promising support from the local government, she is determined to venture into salted egg production, having confidence in its potential.



"Ang mga natutunan ko po sa aming pinag-aralan ay ang pag-aalaga ng itik, pato, uod, langaw, at higit sa lahat, ang paggawa ng itlog na maalat na maaaring pagkakitaan ng mga katulad naming mga may kapansanan," she shared.



37 AEWs in Palawan and Occidental Mindoro Train on Gender-Inclusive Product Development

Erlan D. Pasana

The two batches of the two-day "Training on Product Development in Support of Gender and Development," spearheaded by the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) in MIMAROPA on April 18-19, 2024, and May 22-23, 2024, at ALA AMID Bed and Breakfast in Brgy. San Manuel, Puerto Princesa City, and Lola's Healthy Farm, Inc. in Brgy. Poblacion, Magsaysay, Occidental Mindoro, respectively, equipped 37 Agricultural Extension Workers and farmers in Palawan and Occidental Mindoro with essential skills in gender-inclusive development practices.

Assistant Professor Darwin O. Aniar from Palawan State University; Trade Industry Development Specialist Ms. Mylene G. Parilla and Ms. Julie Ann S. Bangisan from the Department of Trade and Industry, San Jose, Occidental Mindoro; and Administrative Officer/GAD Alternate Focal Person John Edbert S. Alcobera from ATI MIMAROPA served as resource speakers, imparting knowledge on topics related to product development, market research, consumer behavior, and gender equality in product design.

The discussions highlighted the importance of integrating gender perspectives into product development processes. By acknowledging the diverse needs and experiences of different genders, it emphasized creating inclusive, accessible, and suitable products for all users.



Through workshops and practical exercises, the participants also learned about cost management, branding, intellectual property management, and go-to-market strategies, which are essential elements for product success in today's competitive market landscape.

In his message during the closing program of the training, Center Director Pat Andrew B. Barrientos challenged the graduates to apply their learnings by conducting the same training in their respective municipalities, so that farmers of all genders can learn and be given the opportunity to earn.

In her impressions, Ms. Asfiah M. Sahiddin, representing the Municipal Agriculture Office of Bataraza, expressed her gratitude to ATI because the training equipped her with the tools to guide her community-based enterprises toward growth and sustainability.

"As an AEW handling four established community-based enterprises, it is important for us to learn these processes step by step to help our community address their needs in product development and marketing," she shared.





ATI MIMAROPA Take Steps Toward Climate Change Resilience with Bamboo Production Technology Training

Erlan D. Pasana

To equip Agricultural Extension Workers (AEWs) and farmers with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively implement sustainable bamboo production techniques in the context of climate change resilience, the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) in MIMAROPA conducted the "Training on Climate Change: Bamboo Production Technology" on April 22-24, 2024 at Ala Amid Bed and Breakfast in Barangay San Manuel.

Center Director Pat Andrew B. Barrientos of ATI MIMAROPA, together with Supervising Aquaculturist and Head of Fisheries Division Ms. Pacita P. Bravo, offered their full support by gracing the opening program of the three-day training.



In the training, participants understood the concepts of climate change and its implications for agriculture. They also learned about bamboo production technology, covering propagation, plantation establishment, maintenance, and harvesting techniques, as well as its role in climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Moreover, the participants engaged in hands-on activities such as selecting planting materials suitable for bamboo species, preparing soil mediums for bamboo propagules, and learning about the ecological benefits of bamboo.



Ms. Jonabelle C. Ocreto, an AEW from LGU-Brooke's Point, expressed gratitude for the learnings gained during the training. In her impression, she encouraged all the graduates to engage in bamboo production and to share what they have learned with other farmers, especially now that they are facing the effects of climate change.

Attended by 27 participants, composed of 23 AEWs and four farmers, the said training was facilitated by the Administrative and Finance Unit led by Mr. Christian Albert R. Sarabia, OIC-Admin Officer IV/Climate Change Point Person.



ATI MIMAROPA Triumphs at Luzon Cluster B Sports Fest

Erlan D. Pasana

Amidst the loud cheers of "We are one", ATI MIMAROPA won the championship title in the Luzon Cluster B Sports Fest on February 23 to 25, 2024 at the International Training Center on Pig Husbandry (ITCPH), Lipa City, Batangas.

From the start of the event, ATI MIMAROPA demonstrated its competitive advantage in both beauty and intelligence at the Mr. and Ms. Sports Fest. It also lived up to expectations in the cheer dance competition, with its staff showcasing their distinctive dance moves.

With different games, ATI MIMAROPA staff battled out their skills and athleticism in various fun games and sports including Badminton, Table Tennis, Volleyball, and Basketball. Table games also tested their intellectual abilities through strategic games such as chess and scrabble.

The Center emerged victorious in most of the major individual and group categories of games and activities:

- Mr. and Ms. Sports Fest (2nd Runner-Up)
- Cheerdance (Champion)
- Fun Games (Champion)
- Dart Men (Champion)
- Dart Women (Champion)
- Scrabble Men (2nd Runner-Up)
- Chess Men (2nd Runner-Up)
- Chess Women (1st Runner-Up)
- Table Tennis Men (Champion)
- Table Tennis Women (2nd Runner-Up)
- Table Tennis Mix (Champion)
- Badminton Men (2nd Runner-Up)
- Badminton Women (2nd Runner-Up)
- Badminton Mix (2nd Runner-Up)
- Volleyball Men (1st Runner-Up)
- Volleyball Women (Champion)
- Basketball Men (Champion)
- Basketball Women (Champion)



Present during the closing ceremony were ATI National Director Engr. Remelyn Recoter and Deputy Director Antonieta Arceo. Additionally, the symbolic torch of the competition was formally passed to ATI Bicol as the next host of the Sports Fest.

In her message, Dir. Recoter expressed her admiration for the dedication and support of all participants from the four Regional Training Centers in Southern Luzon, namely CALABARZON, MIMAROPA, BICOL and ITCPH.

Egyptian Rice Varieties Show Promising Results at the GOF

Jayson N. Erondo



In a groundbreaking event marking a significant public-private partnership, Egyptian Ambassador H.E. Ahmed Shehabeldin, LLM, together with Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) MIMAROPA Center Director Pat Andrew B. Barrientos, the owner of Gabutero Organic Farm (GOF) Mr. Nelson B. Gabutero Sr., and Municipal Agriculturist of Bongabong Mr. Gary Louie A. Sapinit, led the Rice Field Day on February 28, 2024 at GOF, Labonan, Bongabong, Oriental Mindoro.

The field day highlighted the potential of Egyptian rice varieties to enhance local agricultural practices and improve food security.

During the event, Mr. Gabutero showcased three Egyptian rice varieties: Orabi 3, Orabi 4, and Orabi 5. His presentation included detailed observations and performance data on these varieties, focusing on their productive potential and adaptability to local conditions.

The results revealed some compelling insights:

- Orabi 3 demonstrated impressive plant height, averaging 95.1 cm, indicating its suitability for the local environment.
- Orabi 4 excelled in the number of productive tillers, suggesting it could yield more rice per hectare compared to the other varieties.
- Orabi 5 showed potential but did not surpass Orabi 4 in either plant height or tiller productivity.

Among the varieties tested, Orabi 4 emerged as particularly noteworthy, with a higher number of filled grains per panicle and superior yield parameters. The economic viability of Orabi 4 was further supported by its favorable milling recovery rates, indicating a promising future for its cultivation in the region.

This research is part of a broader effort to integrate climate-smart technologies into local agriculture. The successful adaptation of Egyptian rice varieties could play a crucial role in enhancing food security, achieving rice self-sufficiency, and improving the livelihoods of smallholder farmers, especially during periods of dry spells.

Mr. Gabutero emphasized the importance of continuing the research to fully understand the varieties' potential. He recommended extending the study across at least four cropping seasons, including both dry and wet seasons, to gather comprehensive data and ensure accurate results.





ATI MIMAROPA Recognizes Loyalty Awardees

Erlan D. Pasana

As part of ATI's 37th Founding Anniversary Celebration, 17 ATI MIMAROPA personnel were awarded loyalty awards in recognition of their commitment and dedicated years of service on January 29, 2024, at CAFE Hall B, ATI MIMAROPA, Barcenaga, Naujan, Oriental Mindoro.

Assistant Center Director Norberto C. Maur was present during the awarding ceremony. In his message, he emphasized that the awardees have strived to improve themselves and their capabilities over time which has contributed to the success of the Center.

Among the loyalty awardees are Mr. Christian B. Bacay, Security Guard I who has rendered 20 years of service; Jay-Ar B. Madriaga, Agriculturist II; Joel Ryan R. Pagdato, Development Management Officer I; Jezell dT. dela Cruz, Information Officer II; and Mairiz B. Alcobera, Administrative Support Staff II, who have served for 10 years; along with Edna M. Mojica, Administrative Officer I; Engr. Karen T. Vicente, Agriculturist I; Engr. Cheri Dawn F. Falogme, Media Production Specialist II; Princess Ann A. De Torres, Technical Support Staff II; Lina M. Andal, Administrative Support Staff I; Florence F. Bueno, Security Guard; John Simeon J. Cajayon, Technical Support Staff I; Alma M. Catibog, Technical Support Staff III; Mary Grace R. Villapando, Technical Support Staff III; Diana Faye T. Duran, Technical Support Staff III; Reina B. Madriaga, Technical Support Staff III; and Felix A. Gloria, Security Guard, for five years of service.

"Isang sekreto ng isang empleyado para tumagal sa isang kumpanya ay ang pagganap ng ating trabaho nang maayos, ang pag-unawa at pagsunod sa mga patakarán, at ang laging pagbibigay ng respeto sa ating mga katrabaho at sa mga nakakataas sa atin," Mr. Bacay said

Aside from the loyalty award, Mr. Mel D. Manalo, Planning Officer I also received a "Maagap Award" for demonstrating promptness in completing tasks ahead of schedule. Moreover, Supremo A. Caranzo, Driver, and Roseanne D. Nilo, Media Production Specialist II were recognized for the "Best in Attendance Awards".





ATI MIMAROPA Joins AgriAsenso: Empowering Local Agriculture

Erlan D. Pasana

In celebration of the Agricultural Training Institute's (ATI) 37th Founding Anniversary with the theme "Innovate, Collaborate, Succeed: Growing Together for a Sustainable Future", ATI MIMAROPA joined the AgriAsenso ATI Learning Sites and Product Expo and Techno Forum on February 2-4, 2024 at the TriNoma Malls Activity Center, Quezon City.

The three-day event aimed to assist Learning Sites for Agriculture (LSAs) in making their products more accessible to households. Through this initiative, consumers were given the opportunity to purchase fresh local agricultural products, as well as non-food items from ATI's certified LSAs through its Regional Training Centers (RTCs).

At the ATI MIMAROPA booth, a variety of products were sold including Artemesium café latte, Artemesium herbal coffee, Artemesium strong coffee, banana sticks, calamansi concentrate, calamansi powdered juice, ginger turmeric, oyster mushroom chicharron, peanut butter, salabat, stevia powder, vermicast, wood vinegar, bio-fertilizer and souvenirs, among others. These products were sourced directly from our LSAs and partners, namely, Willandaise Integrated Farm, Gabutero Organic Farm, Blakes Agri-tourism Technofarm Inc., E and B Farm, Yamang Bukid Farm, Salika Agriculture Cooperative, and Mangyan Mission, Inc.

Aside from the product expo, four of the LSA cooperators in the MIMAROPA region led by Mary Help of Christians School (Mindoro), Inc., participated in the three-day TechnoForum.



The event covered topics such as farming practices, technologies, and marketing strategies for farm-to-market products.

Moreover, booth exhibitors at each RTC were given the opportunity during the forum to promote the products they had in their booths, encouraging mall-goers to buy and support local products.

Thanks to the trust given by our partners, for ATI MIMAROPA alone, we have completely sold out the agricultural products generating over Php 128,000.00 in sales.

A total of 16 RTCs including the International Training Center on Pig Husbandry participated in the said event.



ATI MIMAROPA Joins in the Celebration of Women's Month

To celebrate Women's Month, all ATI-MIMAROPA staff gathered and conducted a brief program on March 18, 2024, at CAFÉ Hall A, ATI MIMAROPA, Barcenaga, Naujan, Oriental Mindoro.

Center Director Pat Andrew B. Barrientos delivered his message during the program, emphasizing the significant role that women play in society and expressing his respect for their rights. He also stressed the importance of equal rights for everyone, especially for women, in all fields.

To draw inspiration, selected staff from the Center also expressed their reflections on what empowers them as women and the people who influence their identities, namely, Ms. Cristina G. Magnaye, Training Specialist III; Ms. Josephine D. Umali, Information Officer III; Ms. Shaina Casapao, Technical Support Staff; and Ms. Divina Bañanola, Administrative Support Staff.

Erlan D. Pasana

"An empowered woman embraces her strength, acknowledges and works on her weaknesses, and pursues her goals with determination, continuously striving for personal and professional development. I believe in my abilities, stand up for my rights, am firm in my decisions, and contribute to my community the best I can," Ms. Magnaye shared.

After the short program, the female personnel also participated in various fun games organized by the Administrative and Finance Unit. Moreover, as a gesture of respect and admiration for their abilities and sacrifices as women, they were serenaded and given flowers by their male colleagues.

This year's theme, "LIPUNANG PATAS SA BAGONG PILIPINAS: Kakayahan ng Kababaihan, Patutunayan!" signifies that women are given equitable opportunities and not hindered by gender biases and discriminatory stereotypes. It also aims to showcase and harness the full potentials of women and girls in actively engaging in and reaping the benefits of national growth and development.

Moreover, the Center conducted a Quiz Bee on March 14 and an Agritalk on Violence Against Women and Children on March 26 as part of the celebration.



MinSU IT Students Complete 480-Hour OJT at ATI-MIMAROPA

Erlan D. Pasana

In a celebration of dedication and achievement, the Agricultural Training Institute in MIMAROPA hosted the On-the-Job Training (OJT) Culminating Activity on May 29, 2024. This event marked the end of a 480-hour practical training program for 12 Information Technology (IT) students from Mindoro State University, which began in March 2024.

The ceremony was honored by the presence of Mr. Norberto C. Maur, Assistant Center Director, and Mr. Christian Albert R. Sarabia, Officer-in-Charge Administrative Officer. Both addressed the graduating students and delivered inspiring messages that emphasized the importance of perseverance, continuous learning, and the endless possibilities that lie ahead.



A highlight of the activity was the presentation of the students' final projects. These data-based projects showcased the students' proficiency in IT, demonstrating the valuable skills and knowledge they acquired during their OJT.

This significant milestone not only highlighted the students' accomplishments and hard work but also emphasized the importance of practical experience in their educational journey, both in the IT field and in agriculture, preparing them for future professional endeavors.

ATI MIMAROPA, DICT Oriental Mindoro Host Cybersecurity and eGov Seminar

Erlan D. Pasana

In a collaborative effort to enhance digital safety and governance, the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) in MIMAROPA in partnership with the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) Oriental Mindoro conducted a significant seminar focused on cybersecurity and digital governance on May 17, 2024 at the ATI-MIMAROPA, Barcenaga, Naujan, Oriental Mindoro.

The activity aimed to educate ATI personnel on safeguarding online transactions and communications. This initiative is part of a broader effort to raise awareness about potential security threats and the importance of protecting sensitive information in the digital realm. Engr. Francis Angelo Fabul, Planning Officer II at DICT Oriental Mindoro, spearheaded the one-day activity. He emphasized the role of the Philippine National Public Key Infrastructure (PNPKI) in ensuring the authenticity and security of electronic documents and communications.

Participants were introduced to the benefits of digital signatures and certificates, which are essential for verifying the integrity and validity of digital interactions.

In addition to cybersecurity, DICT Oriental Mindoro also discussed digital governance through an orientation on eGov apps and eLGU platforms. Mr. Jayvee J. Cabuyao, Information System Analyst I, led this session, providing valuable insights on optimizing app functionalities to improve access to government services.

Moreover, Mr. Keanu M. Oracion, Project Development Officer II of DICT Oriental Mindoro, presented the CHIP (Comprehensive ICT for Health, Infrastructure, and Productivity) framework, highlighting the range of ICT-enabled services offered by the department. The presentation aimed to familiarize the ATI personnel with DICT's initiatives and expand their knowledge on available technological advancements.



ATI-MIMAROPA Launches Its 8th FITS Center in Romblon

Erlan D. Pasana



Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials, and other Techno Gabay Program (TGP) services are now available at the Farmers Information and Technology Services (FITS) Center in Alcantara, as it has been officially launched by the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) in MIMAROPA on June 3, 2024.

The FITS Center will serve as a one-stop service for the municipality, with its main function being to provide readily available IEC materials and TGP services for farmers, fishers, and youth, among others.

Present during the activity were Center Director Pat Andrew B. Barrientos, M.M., J.D.; Municipal Mayor Riza G. Pamorada; Municipal Agriculturist Alex John R. Galicia; Media Production Specialist Roseanne D. Nilo; Sangguniang Bayan members; MAO staff; and farmer-leaders.

In his message, Dir. Barrientos encouraged the farmer leaders who attended the FITS launching to make use of the FITS Center and its available IEC resources on agriculture and fisheries. He also informed them about the various programs offered by the ATI, which cover different agricultural commodities.

Hon. Pamorada also expressed her gratitude to ATI-MIMAROPA for the establishment of a FITS Center in the municipality. She emphasized that the FITS-Alcantara would significantly help and support farmers in accessing the latest information related to agriculture and fisheries.

Highlights of the event included the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement, ribbon-cutting ceremony, and turnover of ICT equipment to the FITS Center. Moreover, Ms. Nilo discussed the TGP and its components, as well as the responsibilities of the FITS staff during the activity.

FITS-Alcantara is the 44th FITS Center in the MIMAROPA Region and the 8th in the province of Romblon.



ATI-MIMAROPA Enhances FITS-Romblon with ICT Equipment

Erlan D. Pasana

Center Director Pat Andrew B. Barrientos of the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) in MIMAROPA led the awarding of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools to the three Farmers and Information Technology Services (FITS) Centers in Romblon on June 4, 2024, as part of their enhancement.

The FITS Enhancement aims to improve the capacity and capabilities of FITS Centers in delivering agricultural extension services, empowering local farmers with access to modern technology and information resources.

FITS-Calatrava, FITS-San Agustin, and FITS-Romblon received equipment such as laptops, portable speakers, printers, projectors, cameras, and televisions, among others.

In his message, Dir. Barrientos extended his heartfelt gratitude to the FITS Centers for their commitment to implementing the Techno Gabay Program (TPG) in their localities.

"With the provided resources, you are expected to improve and intensify your delivery of the TGP services to your clients in in the province," he said.

Besides awarding ICT equipment, Ms. Roseanne D. Nilo, Media Production Specialist II of ATI-MIMAROPA also briefed the enhanced FITS Centers on their responsibilities, including the submission of their monthly reports.

Also present during the activity were Mr. Raymund J. Moratin, Municipal Agriculture Officer of Romblon; Mr. Noel F. Falcutilla, Municipal Agriculture Officer of Calatrava; Ms. Grace Ellen Culpa, FITS-Calatrava Manager; Ms. Ruby M. Murchante, Municipal Agriculture Officer of San Agustin; and Engr. Max Famaran, FITS-San Agustin Manager.



Strengthening Partnerships: RCEF Inter-agency Consultation Meeting

Alea Joy G. Gaco

To evaluate and examine the overall implementation of the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund - Rice Extension Services Program (RCEF-RESP), the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) in MIMAROPA conducted an Inter-Agency Consultation Meeting on February 08, 2024 at the ATI-MIMAROPA, Barcenaga, Naujan, Oriental Mindoro.

Center Director Pat Andrew B. Barrientos delivered his message during the opening program of the activity. In his message, he emphasized the importance of the RCEF-RESP to local farmers through the Learning Sites for Agriculture (LSA) and Farm Schools.



MEETING, CONSULTATION, AND PLANNING WORKSHOP

“One of the goals of the RCEF-RESP is to broaden the farmers’ crop production, marketing strategies and good agricultural practices. Therefore, like other Asian countries, farmers and other extension agencies must pursue the successful administration of all government agriculture-related programs through the use of effective and modern farming technologies,” Dir. Barrientos added.



One of the key highlights of the meeting was the presentation of the Center’s accomplishments regarding the RCEF-related trainings and activities in 2023 which was discussed by the RCEF Focal Person Ms. Marilyn G. Gonda. Also, the participants were informed of the lined-up activities of RCEF-RESP for the year 2024.

Moreover, an open forum was facilitated to review extension service interventions that needs to be determined and improved. The issues and concerns relative to RCEF-RESP implementation in the region were also discussed to come up with a solution and prevent them from happening again in the next implementation of the program.

Throughout the consultation, the participants learned strategies from Mr. Nelson S. Gabutero, LSA cooperator of the Gabutero Organic Farm. They underscored the need for coordinated efforts and shared learning to maximize the effectiveness of interventions within the RCEF-RESP.

A total of 30 RCEF-LSA cooperators, farm school owners, and representatives from other implementing agencies such as TESDA, PhilRice, and BPI attended the said one-day activity.

ATI MIMAROPA Facilitates Consultation and Planning for RBOs

Erlan D. Pasana

In accordance with Department of Agriculture (DA) Administrative Order No. 9 of 2002, which designates the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) as the National Secretariat and overall Coordinator for overseeing the 4-H Club and other Rural Based Organizations (RBOs) in DA programs, ATI MIMAROPA held a consultation and planning session for RBO coordinators and presidents on February 20-21, 2024 at ATI MIMAROPA, Barcenaga, Naujan, Oriental Mindoro.

During the session, the participants had the opportunity to review accomplishments from previous years as presented by the provincial coordinators. Challenges encountered in the implementation of activities were shared, encouraging mutual learning and understanding among them. Also, the plans for future activities including target objectives for the current year were discussed and submitted.

One significant aspect of the consultation was the validation of the ATI master list of RBOs. However, it was noted that many municipalities within each province lacked updated information; hence, they were advised to provide necessary updates upon returning to their respective organizations.

The urgent need for the election of new officers for various organizations including VLAP, RIC, P4MP, and the 4-H Club, was highlighted. While the election for the VLAP Regional Federation was successfully conducted, other elections were rescheduled for March 1, 2024 due to a lack of quorum.

Moreover, the contest guidelines and details for the upcoming Regional Youth Camp scheduled on March 19-21, 2024 were discussed. Winners of these contests are set to represent the MIMAROPA region in the National Youth Camp tentatively scheduled in May 2024.

In addition, Mr. Ricmel S. Falqueza, the former National President of the 4-H Club of the Philippines delivered a detailed presentation on RBOs, aimed at refreshing coordinators' understanding and orienting newly assigned technicians from the LGUs for the program. Emphasizing the importance of organizational strengthening, Mr. Falqueza encouraged them to remain committed to their respective roles.

A total of 20 RBO coordinators and presidents from the five provinces of the MIMAROPA Region and representatives from ATI MIMAROPA and DA MIMAROPA Region attended the said two-day activity.





ATI MIMAROPA Leads Livestock Stakeholders' Consultation

Erlan D. Pasana

To strengthen the livestock sector and uplift smallholder livestock and poultry raisers in MIMAROPA, the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) in MIMAROPA convened a "Regional Stakeholders Consultation" on April 12, 2024 at the ATI MIMAROPA, Barcenaga, Naujan, Oriental Mindoro.

Attended by 25 key players in the implementation of livestock and poultry programs in the different provinces in the region, the consultative meeting aimed to enhance understanding of the planned livestock projects and converge partnerships for their successful implementation.

The one-day consultation served as a venue for the Center to present its accomplishments, programs, plans, and activities for the year 2024. Joining hands in the endeavor were other national agencies, including the Department of Agriculture - Regional Field Office MIMAROPA, the National Meat Inspection Services, the National Dairy Authority, and the Philippine Carabao Center at the University of the Philippines Los Baños.

During the activity, critical discussions centered around the challenges posed by the African Swine Fever (ASF) outbreak and its implications for interventions in Oriental Mindoro. Participants engaged in constructive dialogues, addressing concerns, proposing solutions, and outlining priority training needs.

The results and agreements from the meeting will form the basis for crafting the proposed Work and Financial Plan for 2025-2026. This will ensure efficient allocation of resources to address the pressing issues in the livestock and poultry sector.



Energizing Team Collaboration at the ATI MIMAROPA 2023 Annual Review and 2024 Operational Planning Workshop

Manilyn M. Tejada

To assess the Center's overall performance and plan its 2024 targets, the ATI MIMAROPA conducted its 2023 Annual Review and 2024 Operational Planning Workshop on January 23-26, 2024, at ATI MIMAROPA, Barcenaga, Naujan, Oriental Mindoro.

In his message, Center Director Pat Andrew B. Barrientos congratulated everyone for the successful implementation of the Programs, Projects, and Activities (PPAs) planned by the Center for 2023. Also, he encouraged everyone to give their best in implementing the Center's 2024 PPAs.

This was followed by a presentation of the 2023 Physical Accomplishments by Ms. Manilyn M. Tejada, Project Evaluation Officer. Highlights of the discussion included the analysis of the date of implementation as well as the comparison of target participants versus the accomplishments of the Center's 2023 PPAs. After her presentation, she reminded all staff of the deadline for submitting reports and other M&E-related issues.



Then, Mr. Mark Joseph D. Buñag, Acting Budget Officer, and Ms. Edna M. Mojica, Acting Accountant, presented the 2023 Financial Accomplishments. Allotment and Obligation Rates, as well as the Disbursement rate per program were discussed during the activity. They also provided updates on the financial concerns based on the recently concluded ATI closing of the book.



Moreover, the different Banner Program Focal Persons presented their 2024 PPAs. Throughout the presentation, each focal person provided basic information such as agricultural statistics and facts, demographics of the target participants, and activities carried out in previous years which served as the basis for their targets. In addition, the objectives and implementation strategies of the target PPAs were explained to ensure the accomplishment of all performance indicators. They also presented remarkable innovations and best practices employed in meeting the 2023 targets.



Part of the activity was the team building, which was held at Positadi, Pili, Pinamalayan, Oriental Mindoro. The staff were divided into four groups composed of yellow, green, red, and blue teams engaging in various games that encouraged participation from all.

Furthermore, Mr. Christian Albert R. Sarabia, the designated Human Resource Management Officer, provided updates and reminded the staff of the existing rules and regulations regarding proper attire/office uniform, filing of leave, and time-in and time-out procedures using the biometrics system. He also encouraged all qualified staff to apply for the vacant plantilla positions in the office.

The shared learning opportunity promoted teamwork, communication, and unity among group members, which they would carry into their respective roles. Everyone would assist each other as a family to accomplish all the targets of the center and ensure its success.



Enhancing Staff Skills in Writing Content for Websites and Social Media

Erlan D. Pasana

To enhance the Center's presence on its website and social media, the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) in MIMAROPA, through its Information Services Section (ISS), conducted the "Brownbag Session on Writing Content for Websites and Social Media" on March 12, 2024, at ATI MIMAROPA, Barcenaga, Naujan, Oriental Mindoro.

"Mahalaga ang activity na ito, para mahasa ang kakayahan ng staff sa pagsusulat" said by Center Director Pat Andrew B. Barrientos during his opening message. He emphasized that the brown bag session was timely because the Center maintains a website and four social media accounts.

Mr. Erlan D. Pasana, Information Officer II, discussed the topic on article writing. In his lecture, the participants learned various tips for writing a well-structured article for a website, with a particular focus on the content's structure and the key elements of a news article.

Mr. Michael Daven T. Jugno also shared his expertise on creating engaging posts on social media, emphasizing what to post and effective content planning. Moreover, participants learned from his discussion about camera settings for taking photos to ensure high-quality pictures for social media posts.

This activity is part of the staff development program in ATI MIMAROPA, in which ten staff actively participated in the workshop. Each of them submitted a news article about the training implemented at the Center as their output.

Considering the number of programs and activities planned by the ATI MIMAROPA, participants in this session are expected to serve as administrators of the Center's social media accounts, assist the ISS in creating webpage content, and upload posts related to the conducted trainings and activities of the Center.



ATI ACCOMPLISHMENTS

January - June 2024

MIMAROPA



RICE PROGRAM

Total number of participants - 373

- AEWS - 135
- Others - 238

Total number of participants - 227

- AEWS - 93
- Others - 134



CORN PROGRAM

Total number of participants - 143

- AEWS - 65
- Others - 78

Total number of participants - 138

- AEWS - 93
- Others - 45



ORGANIC AGRICULTURE PROGRAM

Total number of participants - 78

- AEWS - 15
- Others - 63

Total number of participants - 176

- AEWS - 9
- Others - 167



RICE COMPETITIVENESS ENHANCEMENT FUND (RCEF)

Total number of participants - 189

- AEWS - 24
- Others - 165

Total number of participants - 287

- AEWS - 32
- Others - 255



REGULAR PROGRAM

Total number of participants for training and other AF-related activities - 321

- AEWS - 153
- Others - 168



LIVESTOCK PROGRAM



HIGH-VALUE CROPS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM



NATIONAL URBAN AND PERI-URBAN AGRICULTURE PROGRAM



COCONUT FARMERS AND INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT PLAN (CFIDP)




**AGRICULTURAL TRAINING INSTITUTE
REGIONAL TRAINING CENTER - MIMAROPA**


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