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DA-ATI Bicol Unveils 'ATIng UMA' During Harvest Fest

PILI, Camarines Sur - With the theme, Ani at Ganansya sa ATIng UMA, the DA-ATI joins the nationwide celebration of ATI'S Urban Agriculture Harvest Festival last May 20, 2021.

Center Director Elsa A.Parot elaborately opened the celebration together with all the employees, the female clad in the traditional baro'tsaya (blouse and skirt) and the male in Camisa de Chino (Chinese shirt) to project a rural setting. To create a fiesta-like atmosphere, the entire compound was adorned with colorful bunting, paper sparklers, and flower arts. Selected dancers performed to the tune of popular Filipino novelty songs.

Director Parot led the tour of the ATIng UMA together with DA Regional Executive Director Rodel Tornilla and CBSUA Vice-President for Research & Innovation Dr. Ramona Isabel Ramirez and Extension Director Vladimir Foronda.

The ATIng UMA or the ATI Unlimited Mentoring in Agriculture is the Center-based Learning Site for Agriculture that showcases diversified and integrated farms and agricultural technology from Organic Agriculture to Rice Production and other crops and livestock. It also promotes Urban Agriculture technologies to attain food availability and sufficiency in different communities in Bicol Region.

The components are:

UMA-Arangkada - With a car as a backdrop, it is a façade garden that characterizes ATI as a vehicle for innovation and transformation. It showcases the science of crop production and the art of landscaping.

UMA-Aruga- A square-foot garden or organized raised bed garden that features a symbiotic relationship of crops ideal for flood-prone areas.

UMA-Angat- A 420-sqm high-value crops production zone where salad vegetables are grown and nourished. ATI has harvested crops valued at Php25,000.

UMA-Ariba - A 75-sqm rice field utilizing a rice-duck farming system, an ecological engineering concept that enhances the growth of beneficial organisms.

UMA-Alaga - The livestock production area. Presently, it raises mallard ducks that just laid more than 300 eggs with a value of more than Php1,500. It also has an incubator.

UMA-Akit - A 4-H-inspired gazebo ideal for relaxation and small group gathering.

UMA-Amaize- A 80-sq.m corn area that produces sweet white and yellow corn using relay cropping technique. Its average harvest is 58 kilos for every 20 sqm or approximately Php2,300 per 20 sqm.

UMA-Aral- The vine-covered tunnel

where you can see a brief history of ATI Bicol.

UMA-Antig - a 25-sqm aquaponics with a capacity of 30 catfish and 80 pechay.

DA Regional Executive Director Rodel Tornilla was impressed. "Nandito na ang lahat. Worthwhile itong project na Urban Gardening at ito gusto natin tuunan ng pansin na ito ay strategy na nakalooob sa ating adhikain na Masaganang Ani at Mataasna Kita. Ang DA ay laging handa na tulungan ang ATI hindi lang sa Urban Gardening kundi pati na sa lahat ng program at proyekto ng ATI. Sama-sama tayong magtulungan para sa mga magsasaka ng Bicolandia."

Dr. Ramirez said, "Sana maraming mga activity na ganito na magpo-promote ng agriculture, economic development at food security. Again, we at CBSUA reiterate our support to all undertakings of ATI as we share the same advocacy in promoting agriculture in our community." There was also an Online Seminar on Vegetable Processing presented by Chef Jang Melgar Grageda.

The one-day activity was streamed online via the ATI Bicol Sarabay Channel on YouTube. **Isagani C. Valenzuela, Jr.**



About the Cover

We conducted the "AgriTalk in Digital Agriculture: BayANIng Magsasaka" via Facebook and YouTube on April 30, 2021.

One of our featured farmers, Mr. Carlito Aquino, is owner and manager of the Salvador and Emeteria Farm in Ocampo, Camarines Sur, an ATI-certified Learning Site for Agriculture. He describes himself simply as a farmer's son.

A retired military man, Mr. Aquino is now fighting poverty as a farmer and trainer in agriculture. In growing crops and raising farm animals, he feels keenly the negative impacts of climate change. To counter these, he innovates in his farming practice and diversifies his produce.

'I was not made to surrender,' he said.



20 Livestock Extension Workers Complete Basic Meat Inspection Course

PILI, CAMARINES SUR - The DA-ATI Bicol has a conducted Basic Meat Inspection Training Course at the ATI Training Hall, San Agustin, Pili, Cam. Sur from April 5 to April 30, 2021. It was conducted thru face-to-face interaction with strict implementation of health protocols such as physical distancing, wearing of facemask, and face shield. The said training was participated by 20 livestock extension workers to enhance their knowledge and skills in meat inspection.



The participants inspect a carcass as part of their hands-on activity.

The training was divided into two parts. The first ten days were devoted to lectures and discussions on Philippine Meat Industry, Rules Implementing the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees, Meat Establishment, Anatomy and Pregnancy Diagnosis, Microbiology and Meat Science, Principles of Disease, Humane Handling of Animals Before Slaughter, Hygiene and Sanitation, Environmental Management, Hygiene and Food Defense, Meat In-

spection and Laboratory, Laws and other issuances on Meat Inspection and other related concerns which are required for the practicum.

The next 10 days were focused on practicum which included observation of cattle, carabao, swine, and poultry slaughtering techniques. Apart from these, the participants

had a thorough inspection of poultry dressing plants and slaughterhouses as well as the proper use of slaughtering equipment, and other meat inspection tasks.

As part of their output, the trainees will hold workshops and training for meat vendors in their localities, and recommend slaughterhouse masters and butchers. **John Kenneth M. Gelario**

DA-ATI Bicol Bats for Bayanihan Initiatives to Beat ASF

“Kung sa Covid, we heal as one, dito rin sa ASF tayo rin ay nagkakaisa. (With Covid we heal as one, with the African Swine Fever also work as one),” observed Center Director Elsa Parot. This happened during the ATI Luzon B Cluster Commitment Signing for the Bantay ASF sa Barangay (BABay ASF) Program hosted by DA-ATI Bicol in partnership with the DA-ATI International Training Center on Pig Husbandry (ITCPH) on March 12, 2021.

Held via Zoom and officiated by no less than ATI Director Alfredo Aton, the inter-regional program launching featured the signing of the Pledge of Commitment by more than 90 stakeholders in Region 4A (Calabarzon), 4B (Mimaropa) and 5 (Bicol). In the Bicol Region, attendees included representatives of state universities and colleges (SUCs), community college and DA

line agencies, as well as extension managers of Provincial/City/Municipal Agriculture and Veterinary Offices.

Dir. Aton emphasized the importance of a unified move to fight the dreaded ASF. *“Malaking problema po itong ASF sa ating industriya. Kailangang maiwasan ang negatibong epekto sa industriya (This ASF is a major problem in our livestock industry. We need to safeguard our industry from the negative effects of ASF). It’s time for us to have a common approach on how to combat ASF.”*

After the formal launch, 40 veterinarians from Provincial Veterinary and Municipal/City Agriculture Offices attended the Bantay ASF sa Barangay Biosecurity and Surveillance

Lecture and Workshop. This online distance learning (ODL) was simultaneously held via Zoom with counterparts in Regions 4A and 4B on March 16, 2021.

To operationalize BABay ASF in communities, 220 City/Municipal Agri-Vets and Livestock Extension Workers attended 11 batches (20 per batch) of the Bantay ASF sa Barangay: Training on Biosecurity, Surveillance and Sample Collection for ASF Control on March 18-19, 2021.

Managed by Engr. Joey Belarmino, PhD, Partnerships and Accreditation Chief and National Livestock Program coordinator of DA-ATI Bicol, these activities aimed to capacitate local veterinarians and livestock extension workers of the region to be able to complement and support the control of the disease. **Primalou B. Imperial**

Sorsogon City Swine Multiplier Project Kicks Off

SORSOGON CITY – The DA-ATI Bicol awarded a stimulus package worth five million pesos to the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Sorsogon City as the latter conducted the Groundbreaking Ceremony for its Swine Multiplier and Technology Demonstration Project.

Vice Mayor Mark Eric Dioneda gave his message during the Groundbreaking Ceremony. *“An saro po digdi sa mga priority kan (one of the priorities of the) City Government is the improvement of the city’s slaughter house. Rest assured that this will last a long time, na masusupportahan dai lang po ngunyan kundi ang mga (that this will support not just the present but) future generations of hog raisers to come. We will make sure that every penny counts, wara po masasayang na kwarta (no money will be wasted).”*

DA-ATI Center Dir. Elsa Parot, Livestock Focal Person Engr. Joey A. Belarmino and Dr. Alexander Destura, City Veterinarian also graced the event.

Initiated under the Bayanihan Act II of the DA-National Live-

stock Program (NLP), DA-ATI and the International Training Center on Pig Husbandry (ATI-ITCPH) are implementing the Nucleus and Multiplier Breeder Farms for Swine. In the Bicol Region, the project is lodged with LGU-Sorsogon City considering the zero incidence of African Swine Fever (ASF) in the province. The Bayanihan To Recover As One Act provides assistance to ensure food security, productivity, and accessibility during the pandemic.

“This project is a very good example of a very good collaboration between the national government and the local government unit,” Dir. Parot noted. *“We at DA and ATI are lucky that we found a partner, a very good partner. We know this project will prosper for the next generations to come. We all know that we are facing the human pandemic and the swine pandemic. The National Livestock Program thought of this one under the Bayanihan II Act, para ang mga magsasaka natin ay makabangon ng mas mabilis sa pandemic na dala ng ASF (so our farmers to recover faster from the pandemic brought by ASF). We*

are very honored to be your partner in this project.”

The Swine Multiplier and Technology Demonstration Project aims to contribute in the genetic improvement of productive swine females in Sorsogon thru the production of quality and DNA-tested female breeders; contribute in the improvement of genetic make-up of slaughter hogs thru the processing and distribution of boar semen; contribute in the supply of safe and nutritious pork through the production of finishers; serve as venue for training and extension, learning of farmers, students, and interested individuals; and support swine-based livelihood programs by producing adequate and quality stocks.

The project components include construction and establishment of farm facilities; procurement of gilts and boars, as well as feeds and biologics; provision of weighing scale and artificial insemination (AI) equipment; distribution of semen thru AI; and distribution of piglets thru swine dispersal to qualified beneficiaries as project payback scheme.

Marjhan V. Ramboyoung



From left to right: Dr. Joey Belarmino, DA-ATI Bicol National Livestock Program Focal Person; Dr. Alexander Destura, City Veterinarian; Sorsogon City Vice Mayor Mark Eric Dioneda; and DA-ATI Center Dir. Elsa Parot, during the awarding of Swine Multiplier and Techno Demo Project stimulus package and groundbreaking ceremony.

DA-ATI Bicol Capacitates Barangay Biosecurity Officers

PILI, Camarines Sur - In support of the national declaration of State of Calamity due to the African Swine Fever (ASF) in the country, the Department of Agriculture-Agricultural Training Institute Regional Training Center V (ATI Bicol) spearheaded the conduct of eleven (11) batches of Bantay African Swine Fever (ASF) sa Barangay Project: Training on Specimen Collection for Barangay Biosecurity Officers (BBOs) in the Provinces of Camarines Sur, Camarines Norte, Albay, Catanduanes, and Sorsogon. The Barangay Biosecurity Officers (BBOs) refer to individuals at the Barangay Level or any assigned person by the LGU who will serve as front liners for ASF Control in the Barangay Level.

Two hundred twenty (220) BBOs endorsed by various LGUs completed the one-day training. They were able to be updated with the status of the ASF Infection in their respective province as presented by their Provincial Veterinarian and Livestock Coordinator. Department of Agriculture- Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) Region 5's Regional Veterinary Quarantine Officer, Dr. Emmanuel Villafuerte shared the topic: Guidelines on Swine Movement and National ASF Zoning.

New Edifice Rises at DA-ATI Bicol Compound

PILI, Camarines Sur - The DA-ATI Bicol through its Livestock Program launches the Livestock Program Meat Processing Hub at ATI Bicol Compound in San Agustin, Pili, Camarines Sur last January 29, 2021. This project is funded under the National Livestock Program (NLP) of the Department of Agriculture (DA) as facilitated by Agricultural Training Institute- International Training Center on Pig Husbandry (ATI-ITCPH).

The activity was attended by Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) Representative, Ms. Rosalyn T. Perida, Vocational School Superintendent I from Ragay Polytechnic Skills Institute, and Ms. Luz Marcelino, Regional Technical Director for Operations from Department of Agriculture- Re-

gional Field Office 5. Ms. Elsa A. Parot, Center Director of ATI Bicol and Engr. Joey A. Belarmino, Ph.D., point person for the livestock program spearheaded the ceremony. The said facility will be used for various activities in support of the National Livestock Program. The hub will serve as the center for meat by-products development and processing activities.

Meat processing tools and equipment were installed in the meat processing hub. This includes a meat grinder, food-grade stainless working tables, shelves, vacuum sealers, freezers, smokers, brick oven, industrial pressure cookers, and many more.

This initiative is in support to the de-

velopment of the value chain in the development of the livestock industry. This also aims to increase the income of raisers and provide farmers with additional income by increasing product costs by developing marketable products.

The facility will not only cater to livestock raisers but also all individuals interested in processing meat. ATI Bicol will use the facility in the conduct of various training programs specifically courses related to meat processing. This year, ATI Bicol will spearhead two training programs titled: Training on Meat Processing for the month of February and September 2021. **Roberto B. Santos, Jr.**

velopment of the value chain in the development of the livestock industry. This also aims to increase the income of raisers and provide farmers with additional income by increasing product costs by developing marketable products.

swine and other poultry animals.

Ordinances at the provincial, city, and municipal levels are suggested to be created in support of the control measures of African Swine Fever in the region. This will allow strict implementation of the control measures at the local level.

ATI Bicol in collaboration with DA-Regional Field Office 5 and Provincial Veterinary Offices will continuously assist LGUs in the conduct of series of BBOs' Training in the LGU level. Based on Administrative Order No. 7 issued by DA, each Barangay shall have designated and trained BBOs. All eleven batches of training were held within May 4-31, 2021 in the abovementioned provinces.

Aside from this training for BBOs, ATI Bicol also trained provincial veterinarians, private veterinarians, and LGU Agriculture Office Livestock Technician and coordinators with regards to ASF control measures. **Roberto B. Santos, Jr.**

ATI Bicol conducted the RCEF Info Caravan in the island province of Masbate on April 13-16, 2021 at 5:00 to 6:00 in the afternoon via Spirit FM and 101.1 Kairos FM. This is made possible with the collaboration of the other RCEF implementing agencies such as Technical and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP), Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and

Mechanization (PhilMech), Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice), and the Office of the Provincial Agriculturist (OPAg).

Day 1 focused on the Rice Tariffication Law and the RCEF extension components and support from local government units (LGUs).

Day 2 tackled the ATI services and those offered by the RCEF-accredited Learning Sites for Agriculture (LSAs). Likewise, resource persons from TESDA shared the agency's extension services under RCEF.

On Day 3, the resource person from PhilRice discussed the Registry System for Basic

SOA-SRA Takes Off in Bicol Region



PILI, Camarines Sur - After months of preparation, the School-on-the-Air (SOA) on Smart Rice Agriculture (SRA) took off with its maiden episode on May 14, 2021.

From inception at the national level, the SOA-SRA was collaborative effort among DA-ATI, DA-Regional Field Office (RFO), and DA-Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice). In its regional implementation, local partners included the Philippine Information Agency (PIA), the Camarines Sur Polytechnic Colleges (CSPC), and various radio stations.

RCEF Info Caravan Goes On Air in Masbate

On Day 4, the resource person from LBP discussed RCEF Mechanization Component and their Extension Services, while the resource person from PhilMech explained the Expanded Rice Credit Assistance and its mechanics.

On Day 5, the resource person from PhilRice discussed the Registry System for Basic

The SOA aims to share through radio the package of cutting-edge rice production technologies and innovative approaches to maximize rice productivity in medium and low yield provinces.

Spearheaded by DA-ATI Bicol with Mr. Michael Villezar as Project Officer, the topics delve on the entire rice value chain as well as innovative, modern and climate-smart rice technologies with the PalayCheck system as the overall platform. The overarching goal is to optimize yield and reduce production cost.

Mechanization (PhilMech), Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice), and the Office of the Provincial Agriculturist (OPAg).

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On Day 3, the resource person from PhilRice discussed the Registry System for Basic

The 16 weekly episodes broadcast in various radio stations in five provinces, including the CSPC campus-based radio station in Nabua, Camarines Sur. The SOA-SRA airs every Friday 10AM over DWEN 100.5 FM in Camarines Norte, Friday 4PM over DWFB 96.7 FM in Catanduanes, Friday 5PM over DWAO 99.9 FM and DWAO 95.3 FM in Sorsogon, Friday 5PM over DZIM 98.3 FM in Masbate, and Saturday 4PM over DWNX 91.1 FM and DWNX 1611 AM in Camarines Sur. **Primalou B. Imperial**

Sectors in Agriculture (RSBSA) as well as the agency's Seed Component and Extension Services.

On Day 4, the resource person from LBP discussed RCEF Mechanization Component and their Extension Services, while the resource person from PhilMech explained the Expanded Rice Credit Assistance and its mechanics.

DA-ATI Bicol shall reach more clients this year through a series of information caravans broadcasting through radio to its clientele. Eight (8) episodes shall be aired in each of the four RCEF priority provinces, namely Masbate, Sorsogon, Albay and Camarines Sur. **Ma. Rafaela V. Bajaro**



20 LFTs Trained On Rice Technology, Proposal Writing

PILI, Camarines Sur - Twenty Local Farmer Technicians (LFT) from Camarines Sur benefitted from the 5-day training by DA-ATI Bicol entitled 'Training of Trainers for LFTs: Enriching Competency of LFTs on Modernized Rice Production Technology and Project Proposal Writing.'

The training aims to develop a core of qualified and trained rice farmers as reinforcement of LGU-based agricultural extension workers in developing and promoting modern rice production and post-production technologies.

Participatory discussions and workshops were primarily used strategies for the learning process. The module focused on the discussion of the following topics 1. The rice industry situation in the Philippines; 2. The Palaycheck System; 3. Developing a farm into a Learning Site for Agriculture; and 4. Writing a simple project proposal. Pre-test and post-test were conducted to gauge the knowledge level of the participants during the training. The post-test indicated that the majority of the participants gained additional knowledge on the course. Moreover, the participants were able to prepare a simple project proposal as an output for the workshop given by the resource person.

Mr. Rio Magellan A. Teodoro of Gainza, Cam. Sur said, 'With this training, I gained knowledge on the Updated Technologies of the PalayCheck System. It is very important that we should know or memorized all the very important that we should know or memorized all the Keycheck and be refreshed always. I've learned how to make a simple project proposal and its importance. It will help me for the planning of requesting whatever needs may arise in the future.'

Ms. Judith Parlero of Ocampo, Camarines Sur shared, 'This training gives me a deep knowledge on PalayCheck. It helps us facilitate the PalayCheck to the farmers during FFS. It's also the first training conducted for LFT on how to make a project proposal. This training guides me to the know-how to make a project proposal. Because of our limitation, it hinders us in accessing assistance to the government fund and as learning site applicants. This is a big help indeed.'

The activity was held at Macagang Business Center, Nabua, Camarines Sur last February 22-26, 2021.

Rice-Duck Training Equips AEWs



Participants try their hands in adding value to rice-duck meat.

PILI, Camarines Sur - The DA-ATI Bicol has conducted the first face-to-face Training on the Rice-Duck Farming System that was participated by 20 Agricultural Extension Workers (AEWs) from various municipalities of Camarines Sur.

Interactive lectures and hands-on activities were the methodologies used to maximize the learning process. The resource persons were Ms. Justine Rose C. Cano, Development Management Officer II (DMO II) of ATI Bicol, Dr. Fermin C. Rabusa and Mr. Marianito-Tesorero from Field Operations Division of DA-RFO 5, and Ms. Melinda Amongo and Mr. Ken Jose Peñaserada of Central Bicol Experimental Station of DA-RFO 5. They discussed the topics such as Integrated Rice-Based Farming System, Palaycheck System, Livestock and Poultry Industry Situation, Package of Technologies in Duck Raising, Proper Record-Keeping and Value Adding Technologies.

After their lecture, hands-on activities were also executed. Through these, the participants were able to apply their knowledge acquired in the lecture. They also had their farm visit at the Carmel Farm in Brgy. Binanuagan, Pili, Cam. Sur, an ATI Bicol-ac-

credited Learning Site for Agriculture.

July B. Renales, a Livestock Program Staff from Pili, Camarines Sur, said: "We learn a lot in this training especially about the proper system in rice-duck farming. This training tackled the way of combining topics about duck and rice, how to apply duck in rice field without disturbance and damaging the standing crop. Also, the exact nutrients in the different stages or ages of duck and the suitable ingredients for the nutrient required were tackled and completely discussed in this training."

Ms Karen Benosa, an Agricultural Technologist from Ocampo, Camarines Sur, added: "I am so thankful sa ATI kasi nabigyanako ng chance to attend the Training on Rice-Duck Farming System because of this, nabigyan ako ng madaming idea at techniques kung paano magkaroon ng successful na rice-duck farming. Thanks to the RPs kasi nalaman namin ang mga do's and don'ts sa pag-iitik."

The training was held at Calaguas Hall, ATI Compound in Brgy. San Agustin, Pili, Cam. Sur last February 15-19, 2021.

John Kenneth M. Gelario

Rural Women Empowered On Herbs



A participant tries her hand in preparing a liniment and ointment as part of the Training on Herbal Production, Processing, and Utilization.

PILI, Camarines Sur - DA-ATI Bicol successfully conducted a three-day Training on Herbal Production, Processing, and Utilization for Rural Women last April 28-30, 2021 at Dacara's Farm, Palestina, Pili, Camarines Sur. It was participated in by 15 rural women from the Municipality of Pili, Camarines Sur.

During the first day of training, the participants were oriented about Organic Agriculture. It was presented by ATI-Bicol Development Management Officer II Ms. Justine Rose C. Cano. She discussed the definition of Organic Farming, the Republic Act 11511 or Organic Agriculture Act, and the Four Principles of Agriculture -Health, Ecology, Fairness, and Health. She also talked about the Principles of

Phototherapy and Herb Utilization such as Diuretic Herbs, Purgative Herbs, Antispasmodic Herbs, Expecto- rant Herbs, Analgesic Herbs and Emmenagogue Herbs.

Later that day, Dacara's Farm and Garden owner and a Learning Site for Agriculture Operator Ms. Angeli- ta L. Dacara discussed Herbal Field Choice and Organic Herb Plantation Establishment. The participants were taught techniques on how to estab- lish an organic herbs garden.

The following day, the participants were infused with knowledge on how to make Organic Fertilizers and Pest and Disease Control. They made concoctions like the Fermented Amino Acid (FFA), Fermented Plant Juice (FPJ), and Fermented Fruit Juice (FFJ). They were also taught how to process

herbs and make liniment and ointment.

On the third day, Ms. Dacara demonstrated dishes and beverages using different herbs. After- ward, ATI-Bicol Training Specialist II Melba SM. Bonafe taught the participants Cost and Return Analysis to record the expenses and income incurred in making liniment and ointment.

The participants were grateful for the said training because it served as an avenue for them to learn more about medicinal and herbal products to boost their immune system especially during this time of the pandemic. The training gathered affirmative responses based on the evalu- ation of the participants. **Joyca O. Labios**

Women's Month Staff Development Focuses on GAD

PILI, Camarines Sur - The DA-ATI Bicol's Women's Month Celebra- tion culminated with a Gender and Development (GAD) and Women of the World (WOW) leadership training for ATI Bicol Staff on March 25-27, 2021. The Career Management and De- velopment Section conducted the blended face-to-face and online training.

Three nationally and interna- tionally certified mentors dis- cussed relevant concepts which enhanced the gender aptitude and leadership skills of 40 admin- istrative and technical personnel

of the Center.

Ms. Melissa Seiglende Bulaong from the National Gender Resource Pool (NGRP) of the Philippine Council for Women (PCW) tackled gender as a social construct as well as the rela- tionship between gender and social institutions.

Ms. Maristela Santy, likewise from NGRP of PCW, infused the partici- pants with discussions and exercises on gender analysis, GAD planning and budgeting, legal mandates and policy imperatives, and what consti- tutes a gender-fair society.

Ms. Tzarina Saldaña, a John Maxwell-trained speaker, shared inspirational and motivational thoughts on women leadership empowerment. Online discus- sions highlighted the importance of competence, character, and connection in effective leader- ship.

The three-day training equipped the participants with the tools needed in responding to gender issues and delivering gen- der-sensitive extension programs and activities. **Joyca O. Labios**



DA-ATI Bicol, Stakeholders Craft 2022 Plans, Budget Proposals

PILI, Camarines Sur - The DA-ATI Bicol led the consultation workshop with its stakeholders for the crafting of plans and budget proposals for the Fiscal Year 2022. It was done virtually via Zoom last January 19-20, 2021. The virtual activity was attended by 60 coordinators of banner programs (Rice, OAP, Corn, HVCDP, Regular, and 4H/RBO) of the six provinces of the Bicol Region.

In her welcome message, DA-ATI Center Director Elsa A. Parot thanked the stakeholders for their continuous support in the implementation of extension services despite the challenges that we had faced. She remained opti-

mistic that despite the new normal, the partnership with the local government units will remain strong.

Mr. Emmanuel L. Orogo, the head of ATI Bicol Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Services Unit discussed the plans, programs, and activities of the center for 2021. On the other hand, Mr. Roberto B. Santos, Jr., ATI Bicol Project Evaluation Officer presented the center's 2020 Accomplishment Report. He presented the accomplishments based on the five Thematic Program on Learn, Exhibit, Advise, Disseminate, Support (LEADS).

The 2021 Work and Financial Plans were reported by the Point Person of

each banner program. They are Engr. Kristine Olila for Rice; Ms. Justine Rose C. Cano for Organic Agriculture; Mr. Edgardo Nacario, Corn; Mr. Orogo, High-Value Crops; Melba SM. Bonafe, Regular Program; and, Engr. Olila for Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF).

On the last day of the activity, the provincial banner programs coordinators had their breakout session with ATI and DA-Regional Field Office counterparts. Then, they presented before the plenary their respective plans and budget proposals for the year 2022. **Charlene O. Freeman**

BAFEN Holds 1st Online Consultation

Via Zoom- It was the first consultative meeting of the Bicol Agriculture and Fisheries Extension Network for the year, and the first time it was held online.

The primary aim of the activity was for the stakeholders to become familiar with the 2021 plans, projects, and programs of DA-ATI Bicol and to harmonize extension services, and strengthen linkages among member agencies of the network. The online consultation was done last February 23, 2021.

Mr. Roberto Santos Jr., Project Evaluation Officer, acknowledged the participants present during the meeting. These include 10 National Government Agencies, 4 state universities and colleges, 7 local government

units, and the private sector.

ATI Center Director, Ms. Elsa Parot, then gave her a message which focused on the need to overcome the limitations set by the Covid-19 pandemic as organizations seek to deliver training and extension services. "We have to face the challenge head-on," she said. "Necessity is the mother of invention, 2020 was a very productive year for us," she summed up, as the DA-ATI Bicol innovated and evolved.

She then shared some updates on the Province-led Agriculture and Fishery Extension Systems (PAFES), as contained in a most recently received memorandum from ATI-Central Office.

The memo reiterates that per the pronouncement of Secretary William

Dar during the ATI Policy Review on January 27th, ATI shall "lead in the conduct of training and advisory services as part of its mandate under existing laws, EO No. 116 s. 1987, RA No. 8435 s. 1997, EO No. 338 s. 2001, and EO No. 366 s. 2004." Particularly, the services include the provision of training, technical assistance, and advisory services responsive to the needs of Agricultural Extension Workers, Farmer-Leaders, and members of organized farmer groups for them to serve as farmer-extensionists, local farmer technicians, and partners.

Ms. Nida Hagos, Development Management Officer I, discussed the overview of the activity. She outlined the activity objectives, as well as the series of presentations that shall take place one

DA-ATI, DA-RFO, CSPC Team Up to Boost Agri Broadcasts



DA-ATI Dir. Elsa Parot, CSPC Pres. Charlito Cadag (center), and DA-RFO Regional Executive Dir. Rodel Tornilla (right) signed the MOA for a tripartite partnership on technology transfer and information dissemination for agriculture stakeholders via the radio and digital television. With them are Dir. Luz Marcelino, Regional Technical Director for Operations and Extensions; Ms. Emilia Bordado, Chief of the Regional Agriculture and Fisheries Information Section; and Dr. Mary Grace Rodriguez, OIC-Chief of Field Operations Division.

PILI, Camarines Sur – The School-on-the-Air (SOA) on Smart Rice Agriculture (SRA) synergized the efforts of DA-ATI, DA-Regional Field Office (RFO) and the Camarines Sur Polytechnic Colleges (CSPC) to widen the SOA's audience reach. Launched on May 14, 2021, the SOA aims to share through radio the cutting-edge rice production technologies and innovative approaches to help maximize rice productivity in medium and low yield provinces.

Spearheaded by DA-ATI Bicol and DA-RFO V, the 16-week broadcasts are aired in various radio stations in five provinces, including the CSPC campus-based radio station in Nabua, Camarines Sur.

Recently, the collaboration expanded and pursued greater heights with the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) among the three entities.

The MOA seeks to accelerate the use of radio and other forms of digital broadcasts technology transfer and information dissemination.

With DA-RFO as the proponent, the tripartite agreement pursues aggressive strategic communication through conventional mass media such as radio, as well as online

platforms such as internet-based broadcast.

The heads of the three parties signed the MOA, namely CSPC Pres. Charlito Cadag, DA-RFO Regional Executive Dir. Rodel Tornilla, and DA-ATI Dir. Elsa Parot. The signing took place on May 19, 2021 at DA-RFO.

CSPC is currently operating a radio studio and frequency for its blended learning courses, as well as will soon launch a digital television facility. DA-RFO shall transfer funds to the school for enhancing its broadcast facilities to be used for technology transfer and information dissemination in agriculture.

DA-ATI shall provide the learning modules and broadcast materials to be aired in development-oriented agricultural radio programs.

Director Parot thanked DA-RFO for the partnership. Under the new normal, the Institute is harnessing the power of radio and TV to reach out to more farmers. "With the pandemic still raging, face-to-face trainings are restricted so we innovated through virtual or blended learning," she added.

Primalou B. Imperial

DA-ATI Bicol, USI Forge Partnership

PILI, Camarines Sur - In its bid to expand partnership with the private sector, the DA-ATI Bicol made a first by tying up with a sectarian academic institution.

Last January 21, the center has signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the Universidad de Sta. Isabel (USI), a Naga City-based Catholic University run by the Daughters of Charity (Vincentian). The latter has also been declared as a Historical and Heritage University for being the first normal school for girls in the Philippines and Southeast Asia.

The MOA was signed by Center Director Elsa Parot and Mr. Alvin Aborde, the Director of the USI-Integrated Community Extension Services and Advocacies. Ms. Vivien Carable, ATI Bicol Assistant Director, and Engr. Joey Belarmino, Chief of the Partnership and Accreditation Services Section, witnessed the signing. Also, around was Antonio Gomez Jr. of USI.

Under the agreement, ATI and USI shall combine forces to empower and improve the quality of life of the least economically resilient farmers and fisheries in the selected communities in the municipalities of Calabanga, Minalabac, and Pili in Camarines Sur.

The programs and services to be extended by ATI include Knowledge Product Development and Dissemination, e-Extension Program, Techno-Gabay Program, Training Program (high-value crops, rice, corn, livestock, organic agriculture, etc.), Skills and Livelihood Training, Agri-preneurship, Information Campaign, Urban gardening, Expository Field Tours and Tree Planting.

On the other hand, USI shall implement projects and activities under its BUHAI-CES Program that involves Community Organizing; Faith and Leadership Formation; Educational Services and Social Advocacy; Capacity-Building; Livelihood Development & Infrastructure; Nutrition, Health & Wellness; Environmental Rehabilitation and Regeneration; and Developmental Research.

The MOA signing was held at the ATI compound in Brgy. San Agustin, Pili, Camarines Sur. **Isagani C. Valenzuela, Jr.**

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CARLITO AQUINO

Patuloy ang Pagsasaka sa Panahon ng Unos at Pag-Unlad

Isang anak ng magsasaka, ngayon ay isang leader at trainer para sa maunlad na agrikultura. Dating mandirigma at kawani ng Sandatahang Lakas ng Pilipinas, ngayon ay nilalaban ang kagutuman at kahirapan dulo ng pandemya.

Si Carlito Aquino ay may-ari ng Salvador and Emeteria Farm na matatagpuan sa Ocampo, Camarines Sur. Ang Salvador and Emeteria Farm ay Learning Site ng Agricultural Training Institute (ATI).

PAG-INO NG PAGSASAKA

Anak po ako ng magsasaka. Bumalik ako sa pagsasaka after akong magretiro sa Armed Forces.

Bago po ako umuwi dito, sa Mindanao ako nakabili ng lote. Dun ako nag-experiment sa vegetable production. Sa 200 sqm na pechay, makakapagpa-aral kayo ng isang college sa private school. Idi-divide nyo lang po sa apat na parte. Every week po kayo magtatanim. The following month, every week kayo magha-harvest. Meron kayong income very week.

Yung basic education ko ay agriculture. Ako po ay lumaki sa farm, dahil ang mga magulang ko ay farmers. Kaya ako napunta dito kasi walang nagmamaneha, walang nag-aalaga sa aming farm.

Tatlong (3) ektarya po ito (Salvador and Emeteria Farm). Salvador po tatay ko at Emeteria po ang nanay ko. Gusto ko po buhay sila forever, hindi sila makalimutan.

Ang pinakamalaking area ay para sa rice production. Nagtataka ako noong una, pagbaba ng mga tao sa sasakyan, may dala silang mga biniling gulay. Bakit, wala bang nagtatanim ng gulay sa amin? Ang ginawa ko, may area saking palayan na ginawa kong taniman ng gulay. May makikita ditong nakatanim na gulay na hindi lang pala tumutubo sa malamig na klima.

Nag-start ako sa 1,000 sqm na gulayan. May palayan ako, may gulayan pa, pero wala naman akong isda. Ginawa ko ang tinatawag na rice-fish at vegetable-fish farming. Controlled ang lalim ng tubig na kailangan ng isda. At the same time, na-utilize ko yung dikes sa pagtanim ng vegetables. Hindi mo na kailangang magdilig kasi ang ugat nandun na sa fishpond.

Sa pagpa-farm, kailangan natin ang kapital. Hindi lang naman pera ang kapital. Isang kapital rin ang marunong ka, ibig sabihin may technology at may interes.

Nag-start po akong mag-farm 2009 nang umuwi ako sa Bicol. Malaki ang pasalamat ko kasi pag-start ko wala pong bagyo. Pero noong 2014, nag-umpisa ang aking kalbaryo. Dumating ang bagyong Glenda. Sabi ni Misis, 'Umuwi na kaya tayo sa Mindanao?' Doon talaga ang aming residence. Sabi ko, 'Hindi. I was not made to surrender.' In my previous work, never.

Since wala pa akong enough fund para ma-rehab ang farm, nag-focus ako sa community, matulungan ang iba bago ang sarili. Hindi ko naman totally iniwan ang farm. Pero ang rehabilitation napakabagal talaga.

PAGSASAKANG MAY SIYENSYA

Nang ma-involve ako sa organic agriculture, dun ko na-realize na dapat healthy ang ipapakain mo sayong pamilya. Nang bumalik ako sa farming, doon ako sa organic agriculture. Ang laki ng pasalamat ko sa Department of Agriculture at sa ATI. Natuto ako ng mga teknolohiya tungkol sa organikong pagsasaka.

Nandyan ang support ng government. Number one dyan ang ATI. Naipadala ako sa maraming training. Yun pala, magiging requirement ang training para maging accredited Farm School ng TESDA. Kaya napabilang kami sa Farm School ng TESDA sa RCEF.

Bilang isang organic agriculture practitioner, nagsasaliksik pa rin po ako. Ang pag-produce ng high-quality inbred rice seeds ay isa pong teknolohiya na galing sa PhilRice na pinadaan sa ATI upang maipamahagi ang teknolohiya sa mga magsasaka.

Nakarating ako dun sa mas maraming crops, mas maraming livestock sa aking farm, kasi yun ang pangangailangan ng tao. Kasi producer tayo ng pagkain. Kailangan, hindi palay lang. Paano ang pang-ulam?

Sa ngayon may mga vegetables po kami, may standing rice crops dito ngayon at may bagong harvest. Nagtatanim

din po kami ng lettuce, pipino, iba't-ibang vegetables na ginagamit natin sa araw-araw.

Merong kaming dalawang (2) dairy cow, meron ding babaeng kalabaw, at may mga baboy rin po.

Kahit na ang aming baboy ay hindi apektado ng ASF, nagkaroon po kaming plano na tangkilikin namin ang pino-promote ngayon ng Department of Agriculture, ang pag-aalaga ng rabbit. Nagpo-produce po kami ng mga breeders para in the future makatulong sa pang-substitute sa swine. Nagbi-breed po ako ng rabbit para ma-sustain ang pangangailangan ng maraming kababayan, makapag-supply tayo ng meat.

ISTRATEHIYA LABAN SA KALAMIDAD

May positive at negative effects ang pandemic. Nabalwasan ang mobility natin. Pero nakapag-concentrate ako sa rehab ng farm nang dumating ang bagyo. Nakapag-focus ako sa development ng farm, sa paggawa ng modules na kailangan sa training.

Sa panahon ng lockdown, nag-stay po ako dito sa farm. Na-manage ko ito nang husto. Hands-on ako sa pagsasaka ng palay at gulay.

Nang dinaanan tayo ng tatlong (3) sunud-sunod na bagyo, lahat ng magandang anyo naging hindi na magandang anyo. Ang seed production ko nga po, hindi ko na-harvest yun. Nadapa lang po yun. Nang bumabangon na sya, andyan na naman ang sunod.

Ang damage ko po noon sa rice production, umabot po ng 99%.

Sa farming, sa pandemic, kailangang meron kang diverse varieties na pwedemong itanim. Kung wala kang koleksyon ng varieties na itinatanim mo, paano ka maghahanap kung may restriction sa ating mobility?

Ngayong pandemya, kulang po ang mobility ng mga tao, ito ang time para makapag-imbak kayo ng sarili

ninyong binhi at wag po kayong matakot dito sa pandemya. Sundin lang natin ang mga protocols na pinatutupad ng ating pamahalaan. Napakalaki po ng advantage natin dito sa probinsya. Sana ma-encourage natin ang ating mga magsasaka na patuloy natin tangkilikin ang pagsasaka at wag tayong mawalan ng pag-asa.

Magkaroon tayo ng koleksyon ng mga varieties at pananim. Magkaroon tayo ng finatawag na community seed bank. Sa ngayon, napansin kong ang mga magsasaka ay nagtitiyaga lang sa kung ano ang available na pananim. Kahit hindi maganda ang seeds ay itinanim nila.

In case of calamity, kailangan natin ang pang-distribute sa mga magsasaka o meron tayong maitatanim na pakbet vegetables at rice varieties para sa tag-init o tag-ulan. Kahit pandemic, ang klima natin hindi nagbabago, dapat meron tayong nakaimbak na pananim.

Mas maganda po kung ang unang bunga ng ating tanim ay gawin nating seeds. 'Pag mayron po tayong mga seeds, wala po tayong magiging problema lalo na sa short-season vegetables. Kapag dinaanan tayo ng calamity, makakapag-tanim tayo agad, makikita natin ang malaking presyo. Pag dinaanan tayo ng calamity, number one pong problema natin ang gulay. Isang opportunity po ito, dapat mayron tayong nakaimbak na seeds.

Umpisahan natin ang mag-imbak ng sarili nating binhing itanim. Kahit po anong calamity ang dumaan, tatayo at tatayo pa rin kapag tayo ay may pananim dahil may imbak tayong sariling binhi.

LAKAS NG PAGKAKAISA

Sa farming, dapat hindi tayo mawalan ng pag-asa. Minсан isi-

nasangla ang lupa, ibinebenta para bumili ng motor pampasada. Hindi nila alam na ang motor nagde-depreciate. Pero ang lupa, nag-a-appreciate ang value. Hindi bumababa ang presyo ng lupa, hindi tulad ng behikulo na ipinagpalit sa lupa.

'Wag ka lang makalimot sa taas, laging may gabay sayo. Tayong mga Bicolano, versatile tayo pagdating sa weather. Kahit anong klaseng calamity ang dumating sa atin, malalampasan natin. Ang mga Bicolano parang saging. Pag dinaanan ng bagyo ang saging, lahat yan tumba. Pero pag tinapyasan ang katawan, uusbong at magkaroon ulit ng shoot para maging productive.

Ang struggle, wag nyong isipin. Mayrong mga paraan kung paano maka-recover. Daanan man ng bagyo, parang saging yan. Dadapa lang ang katawan pero ang puno nandyan. Ang struggle, part lang ng life yan.

Kung meron kayong lupain, kahit maliit, pagyamanin po ninyo. Marami pong technology. Nandyan ang ating mga Learning Sites. Matutulungan namin kayo kung paano ninyo madi-develop ang lupa.

Sa farming, kailangan mo lang mag-isip, kailangan mong maghanap ng tulong. Andito po ang ATI, andyan ang mga Learning Sites. Magtext lang, mag-Google, marami pong mapagkukunan ng technology. Ang kailangan lang, interes.

Bakit tayo nagkaroon ng problemang ASF? Ang nakita ko dyan, mga imported na materials sa feeds at mga imported na karne. Wala namang ASF dito sa Pilipinas. Galing ibang bansa yan.

Kung mag-organize tayo, mag-create tayo ng isang business association para tayo ang mag-produce ng ating feeds, meron tayong mga raw materials. Ang pinaka-base ng ating feeds ay ipa, ang rice production dito sa atin ay napakalaki.

Ang ingredients na ihahalo natin, abundant tayo sa mais. Magkano na lang ang kilo ng mais, lalo na sa panahon ng tag-ulan? Pero kung tayo mismo ang gagamit as raw materials, gawin nating feeds, ang laki ng magiging menos sa gastos ng mga nag-aalaga ng baboy pagdating sa feeds. Igrupo natin ang mga backyard producers ng baboy. Pag-organized tayo, pwede tayong humingi ng assistance sa gobyerno.

Dito sa Kabikolan, tayo po ay laging pinapasyalan ng mga kalamidad. Mas maganda po kung mag-imbak tayo ng sarili nating seeds. Kung tayo ay magsasaka ng palay, mag-enroll po tayo sa RCEF training ng TESDA at ATI. Pumunta po tayo sa accredited Learning Sites para matuto kung paano mag-produce ng sarili nating mataas na kalidad na binhi.

Siguraduhin nating meron tayong pwedeng pagtaguan ng livestock sa panahon ng kalamidad.

LEARNING SITE

Ako po ay nagtuturo na about farming simula 2012 dahil sa programa ng ATI sa Learning Site. Papunta na po ito sa pagiging Farm School, ngayon meron na kaming mga training na galing TESDA.

Ako po ay rice farm machinery operation NC II holder. Kaya nakakapagturo na rin po ako ng rice farm machinery operation.

Sa panahon ng pandemic, nashare ko directly sa community kung ano ang mga dapat gawin sa sakahan. Doon nakikita ko ang kanilang appreciation na ganun din pala ang kanilang dapat gawin. Dahil dito, na-influence ng ating mga technologies ang community. Ang services bilang Learning Site ay makatulong sa community through vital technologies.

DA-ATI Bicol Certifies New LSA in Ragay, Cam. Sur

RAGAY, Camarines Sur - His voice was cracking. Then, Mr. Arnold Manuel bowed silently and held back his tears.

'Hindi naman talaga naming ito binalak pero nandito na kami. Nanalangin ako sa kanya na 'Lord, dinala Mo kami sa lugar naito, bahala Ka kung ano ang gusto mong mangyari sa amin.' Mr. Manuel narrated. (We do not plan this but here we are. I prayed to God "Lord, You've brought me here. It's up to You what You want to happen to us.)

In 2018, he migrated from Metro Manila to build a farm in Brgy. Godofredo Reyes Sr. or GRS with his partner, Nancy Jaen. They blend their names and call their farm, ARNZY. Now, it is a certified Learning Site for Agriculture or LSA.

DA-ATI Bicol Center Director Elsa A. Parot, with Partnership and Accreditation Service Section Chief Engr. Joey Belardino, conferred the Certificate of Accreditation to the couple in a simple ceremony inside the one-hectare integrated organic farm, where currently, ATI is holding a training on Organic Agriculture and Mr. Manuel is a resource person.

'Kami sa ATI ay hindi kaya isanay ang lahat ng mgamagsasaka. Kaya gumawa kami ng xerox copy ng ating mga sarili. At ito ang mga LSA.' Director Parot said.



DA-ATI Bicol Center Director Elsa A. Parot (left) confers the Certificate of Accreditation to Mr. Arnold Manuel and Ms. Nancy Jaen, owners of ARNZY Integrated Farm.

'Sana kayo ay ma-inspire at gayahin nyo sila Arnold at Nancy. ' she challenged the farmers who participated in the ongoing training.

Ms. Teresita Bravo, the Municipal Agriculturist of Ragay, was thankful to ATI for the recognition it awarded to AZNY as well as its contribution to its agriculture sector.

'Napakalaki ang tulong ng ATI lalo na sa pamamahagi ng mga bagong pamamaraan sa pagsasaka. Nagpapasalamat din ako kila Arnold at Nancy na may katulad nila na nagpupursigi na makatulong sa ating mga magsasaka at magsilbing halim-

bawa na sa gayon ay makumbinsi ang mga magsasaka na gumamit ng makabagong teknolohiya.'

Finally, Mr. Sandy Maxquint Latonio, the Ragay Tourism Officer, said that they are refocusing their tourism program. Instead of beaches, the town will be shifting to farm tourism. 'That is why next month, the Department of Tourism is inviting ARNZY Farm to be part of the Regional Tourism Convention.'

Now, the possibilities for ARNZY Farm are endless. **Isagani C. Valenzuela, Jr.**

DA-ATI Bicol Raises Sonrisa's Status to ESP

MAGARAO, Cam. Sur - The Sonrisa Farm made history by becoming the first Learning Site for Agriculture to become an Extension Service Provider in the Bicol Region.

The DA-ATI conceptualized the tiered approach to its extension services which focuses on productivity-enhancing interventions directed mainly towards the development of the farmers and farm families.

The approach involves a four-step ladder starting from building their capacities through training and other related activity; to their farms becoming Learning Sites for Agriculture (LSA), which is a venue wherein individuals can learn relevant AF technologies; then, to being elevated into a School for Practical Agriculture (SPA) wherein the farm owner/cooperator themselves becomes the resource persons and shares AF technologies in their farms; and later on becoming a private extension service provider (ESP), which is considered as a full-fledged extension organization.

"Our joy is overwhelming. Our goal is not just to level up the status of farming. More importantly, it is to uplift the dignity of our farmers. With the distinction you've given us, rest assured we will further enhance the service that we are providing." said Cherry Lo, the owner of the 4.5-hectare integrated farm that boasts of organically grown high-value crops, rice, vegetables, and livestock.

Center Director Elsa Parot awarded the certification of accreditation in an elaborate ceremony held at the sprawling farm in Brgy. Carangcang, Magarao, Cam. Sur. "My heart is full. My aspiration is for Sonrisa to become an ESP, a premier farm in Bicol. Sonrisa and ATI both share the love, passion, and hard work to help the farmers." Director Parot said.

The council is composed of members from the three pillars of extension- the national government agencies and the local government units, the State Universities and Colleges, and the private sector.

Dr. Alberto Naperi, the President of the Central Bicol State University of Agriculture (CBSUA) heads the council. 'I congratulate Sonrisa for their achievement. You have bested two other applicants. Sonrisa is also our partner in our extension program. My wish is for continuous growth so that you can serve more people and not just here in Bicol.'

Mr. Jose Cordero of the Regional Agriculture and Fisheries Council stated that 'Sonrisa is a success story worth emulating. This is the model our farmers must adopt.'

Magarao Mayor Philip Salvador Señor couldn't be prouder, 'We are very happy that the very first LSA to become ESP in Bicol can be found here in Magarao. Ever since Sonrisa put up their farm here, the benefits they've brought to our town have just been astounding. What more now that they are already an ESP? I believe those will reach even beyond Magarao.' **Isagani C. Valenzuela, Jr.**





Engr. Joey A. Belarmino PhD, DA-ATI Bicol partnerships and accreditation chief and Ms. Vivien V. Carable, Assistant Center Director and RTWG Vice-Chairperson, spearhead the RCEF-LSA validation and accreditation in the Bicol Region.

New RCEF Learning Sites Validated

The DA-ATI Bicol validated Mercedes Science Farm and Bermudez farm as qualified Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) Learning Sites for Agriculture (LSA).

Mercedes Science Farm, owned by Mr. Lorenzo Gregorio Nuñez, is located in Libmanan, Camarines Sur. It complied with the required 1-hectare rice farm. It also has additional areas for producing corn, coconut, various fruits, and free-range chickens. It also has a multi-purpose activity hall equipped with toilets and hand washing area. There is an ongoing construction of warehouse and postharvest building to serve as demonstration area for postharvest storage, milling and drying of rice. Mr. Nuñez shared the innovations and commitment for his farm to become a Farm School.

Bermudez Farm in Minalabac, Camarines Sur is owned by Mr. Gerry A. Bermudez. The farm complied with the 1-hectare

rice farm requirement. It also has livestock area producing free range chickens, as well as existing training rooms, power tiller, thresher and other farm machineries. Mr. Bermudez shared his innovations and plan to gain more farm tourists and visitors.

The RCEF-LSA Regional Technical Working Group (RTWG) conducted the validation on March 09, 2021 spearheaded by Engr. Joey A. Belarmino PhD, partnerships and accreditation chief and Ms. Vivien V. Carable, Assistant Center Director and RTWG Vice-Chairperson.

Participating in the validation were Mr. Emmanuel L. Orogo, Planning Officer and RTWG member; Mr. Alexander O. Vargas, Training Specialist I and RTWG member; Ms. Rafaela Bajaro, RCEF Technical Staff; as well as Ms. Marianne B. Felizardo, Agricultural Technologist, and Engr. Lilibeth Patoc, Agriculturist II of the Libmanan Municipal Agriculture Office. **Ma. Rafaela V. Bajaro**

RCM Training Enables More FITS Centers

PILI, Camarines Sur - The Distance Training of Trainers on Rice Crop Manager (RCM) Advisory Services pulled off amidst surging Covid-19 cases in the Bicol Region and the threat of Typhoon Bising.

Fifteen Farmers Information and Technology Service Centers (FITS) from the six provinces of the region attended the four-day online training via Google Meet. It was held last April 20-23, 2021.

This is the second time the training was conducted digitally because of the pandemic threat. Last year, the online training was the first of its kind done nationwide.

DA-ATI Bicol Center Director Elsa A. Parot, in her opening remarks, challenged the FITS Centers to up the ante in serving the farmers through the use of information and communication technology or ICT. 'Dapat mas palawakin pa ang paggamit ng RCM dahil ito ay bahagi ng Digital Agriculture nasinusulong ng Department of Agriculture para mapaigting ang pagkamit ng layuning 'Masaganang Ani at Mataasnakita.'

The participants who are mostly Agriculture Extension Workers were briefed on the use and navigation of RCM Advisory Services namely the Rice Crop Manager, RCM User Registration, RCM Farmer and Field Registration, RCM Android App, RCM ID Maker, RCM Monitor, RCM Statistics, and other features. More importantly, they were trained on the use of a geotagging device.

They also performed actual activities in their respective areas by registering rice farmers, measuring their farms, and conducting interviews with the use of the RCM applications. They also provided printed recommendations to the farmers that contain advice on nutrient management, weed management, crop health management, controlled irrigation, and target yield.

RCM Advisory Service is a web-based platform that consolidates Rice Crop Manager and complementary decision-making tools and services into one integrated advisory and information service for rice-based farming in the Philippines. These tools and services aim to reduce production costs, increase yields, increase net income, and facilitate a professional extension service deploying appropriate information at correct times to farmers through ICT. **Isagani C. Valenzuela, Jr.**

FITS Hub sa Barangay Launched

The DA-ATI Bicol has Launched six Farmers Information Technology Services or FITS Hub sa Barangay with Urban Agriculture Garden in the Province of Camarines Sur, Camarines Norte, Albay, and Sorsogon.

The FITS Hub sa Barangay with Urban Agriculture Garden serves as a source of information to increase the knowledge of farmers, youth, and other stakeholders in agriculture and fisheries. It also seeks to encourage households to plant and produce their own food. Further to strengthen and make it more accessible and available to the community especially for the youth.

The DA-ATI Bicol awarded one set of ICT Equipment (computer and printer with complete accessories), Information, Education and Communication (IEC) Materials, office supplies, and tarpaulin



The Barangay Officials from Barangay Camambugan in Daet, Camarines Norte receive their set of computer equipment.

to the six beneficiaries in the Bicol Region, namely: Barangay Sta. Cruz, San Fernando, Camarines Sur; Barangay San Juan, Tabaco City, Albay; Barangay 18 Cabagnan West, Legazpi City, Albay; Barangay San Pascual Bacon District Sorsogon City; Barangay Bacon-acud Magallanes, Sorsogon;

and Barangay Camambugan, Daet, Camarines Norte.

This project is in support of the Plant PlantPlant Program of the Department of Agriculture and in complementation to the Urban Agriculture Program of the department. **Shenna P. Naval**

5 FITS-RCEF Kiosks Now in San Fernando, Camarines Sur

SAN FERNANDO, Camarines Sur -- "ATI as the training arm of Agriculture believes that information is power maski sain kita magduman (wherever we go)." With these words, ATI Bicol Center Director Elsa Parot emphasized the importance of farmers' access to the right information.

This happened during the turnover of information, education and communication (IEC) materials and other grants from ATI Bicol to barangay officials of Rizal, Grijalvo, Pamukid, Del Pilar, and Planza in San Fernando, Camarines Sur.

The turnover ceremony marked the establishment of five Barangay Farmers Information and Technology Services (FITS) Kiosks funded by the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF).

The five FITS-RCEF Kiosks received information and com-

munication technology (ICT) equipment, furniture and IEC materials. These consist of one unit each of 32" Smart TV, coffee table with two chairs, IEC rack, and tarpaulin posters. In addition, each received 200 copies of Gabay sa Magsasaka brochure and 100 copies of Gabay sa Makabagong Pagpapalayan pamphlets.

Present during the activity were Center Director Elsa Parot, Assistant Center Director Vivien Carable who is the RCEF Team Leader, FITS Point Person and Information Officer II Michael Villezar, Del Pilar Barangay Captain Lourdes Portuguez, Grijalvo Barangay Captain Julian Coros, Pamukid Barangay Captain William Masapol, Planza Barangay Captain Arlene Paloma, Rizal Barangay Captain Cesar Hufancia, the Municipal RCEF Coordinator Ms. Lutgarda-Lumabao, Municipal Agriculturist Allan Salvador, and San

Fernando Mayor Hon. Fermin Mabulo.

Mayor Mabulo expressed his thanks during the turnover ceremony.

"Tinatao na sa mga farmers ang access sa technology kang Department of Agriculture (Now DA has given the farmers access to technology through the establishment of FITS Kiosks)."

The FITS Kiosks are expected to increase the capacity of the Barangay LGU and extension workers in providing information and technology services to rice farmers to realize the goal of the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL). **Ma. Rafaela V. Bajaro**

RCEF-RESP Inter-Agency Consultation Meeting Held

PILI, Camarines Sur - Rice is the staple food of Filipinos. Further, it is economically important as well as socially and politically sensitive commodity. With the country's mostly low-income consumers and burgeoning population, rice production technologies are foci of agricultural development efforts. COVID-19 also brought extraordinary challenges to the agricultural sector.

Thus, the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) continuously provides direct assistance to rice farmers in the form of farm machinery and equipment, high quality inbred rice seeds, skills enhancement, and expanded credit services.

These interventions aim to help the farmers increase their rice yield and lower the production cost, as well as protect rice consumers from price hikes. The provision of extension services enables the farmers to enhance their capability in using yield-enhancing and cost-reducing rice production

technologies.

DA-ATI Bicol, the primary training arm and lead agency of the Department of Agriculture in Region V, heads the RCEF-Rice Extension Services Program (RESP) implementation.

To successfully attain the RCEF-RESP goals and objectives, DA-ATI Bicol together with the regional offices of Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice), Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization (PhilMech) and Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) coordinated closely with other government agencies as well as local government units (LGUs).

To further strengthen the partnership among these program implementers, DA-ATI Bicol conducted a one-day RCEF-RESP Consultation Meeting. The activity sought to harmonize the activities to collaboratively meet the extension targets. The agency representatives also discussed

the issues and concerns as well as the actions taken regarding its implementation in the region, particularly with the limitations brought by the pandemic.

Present during the Consultation Meeting were key officials of DA-ATI Bicol, DA-Regional Field Office (DA-RFO), TESDA, PhilMech, PhilRice, Albay Provincial Agriculture Office (APAO), and the Bureau of Plant Industry-National Seed Quality Control Services (BPI-NSQCS).

Also present were the owners/cooperators of the DA-ATI Learning Sites for Agriculture (LSA) which served as TESDA-accredited Farm Schools – namely, Mr. Noe B. Ocbian of Ocbian Nature Farm, Mr. Noah I. Portuguez and Ms. Chiqui A. Sandagon of Pilipinas Shell Training Farm, Ms. Welisa V. Amante of Darwel Agricultural Farm, Mr. Edra Angel B. Rañeses of MA-DA Bustamante Family Farm, Mr. Carlito P. Aquino and Ms. Shaidel Stairapan of Salvador

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The RCEF-RESP Consultation Meeting participants included key officials of DA-ATI Bicol, DA-RFU, TESDA, PhilRice, PhilMech, LGU-Albay, and LSAs serving as Farm Schools.

Prospective Seed Growers Learn Seed Growing, Quality Control under RCEF



NABUA, Camarines Sur -- DA-ATI Bicol held a five-day intensive Training on Inbred Rice Seed Production, Certification and Quality Control with Gender and Development (GAD) Concepts. Funded by the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF), the activity took place on February 22-26, 2021 at Nabua, Camarines Sur.

The training produced 24 prospective seed growers in three provinces of Bicol Region, namely Camarines Sur, Albay, and Sorsogon. Of these, 10 were from Camarines Sur, 13 from Albay, and one from Sorsogon.

Resource persons who discussed the seven training modules represented the Albay Provincial Agricultural

Office (APAO), Department of Agriculture-Regional Field Office No. V6 (DA-RFO 5), Philippine Commission on Women (PCW), and the Bureau of Plant Industry-National Seed Quality Control Services 5 (BPI-NSQCS 5).

One of the training highlights was a field practicum on field inspection and rouging in an inbred rice seed field, which was conducted at DA-RFO 5. The participants identified and collected off-types, weeds and insects in their assigned rice field area.

During the Closing Program, the participants gave their feedbacks about the training. One stated, "Maraming salamat sa ATI dahil naging parte ako ng training na ito. Napakaswerte namin dahil isa

kami sa mga napili ni ATI para umattend ng training na ito. Patuloy na nadadagdagan ang aming kaalaman at mas lalong kaming nagkakaroon ng tamang gabay sa pag-sasaka." (Thank you ATI for allowing me to be part of this training. We are very fortunate to have been chosen by ATI to attend this training. We continue to learn and receive the right guidance in farming.)

The graduates are expected to become seed growers in the Bicol Region. They received training kits which included an ATI face mask, face shield, alcohol, polo shirt, long sleeved T-shirt, RCEF cowboy hat, RCEF calendar, flash drive containing the learning materials about the modules discussed, and RCEF knowledge products. **Ma. Rafaela V. Bajaro**

From Trainees to Trainers: 20 Learn to Teach Production of High-Quality Inbred Rice and Seeds, Farm Mechanization

LEGAZPI CITY, Albay - The DA-ATI Bicol conducted a 12-day intensive training for Agricultural Extension Workers (AEWs) and Learning Site Cooperators. Conducted on March 15-26, 2021 in Legazpi City, the Training of Trainers (TOT) on High-Quality Inbred Rice & Seeds and Farm Mechanization is a high-level professional learning process for qualified trainers who will provide training and capacity building assistance for farmers.

Participants consisted of 15 AEWs and five technical experts from Learning Sites for Agriculture (LSA) in Camarines Sur, Albay, Masbate and Sorsogon.

Topics discussed included Rice Industry Situation in the Philippines, Understanding the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF), its Implications to Rice farmers, Rice Morphology and Growth

Stages, Farm Machinery Operation and Safety, as well as the PalayCheck System. Financial Analysis and Guidelines on Seed Certification, as well as the RCEF components of seed, mechanization, and credit were also discussed.

The trainees took part in hands-on activities on Seedling Preparation, Transplanting using the rice transplanter, direct seeding, land preparation, and harvesting. During the Agro-Ecosystem Analysis (AESA) they conducted rousing, as well as collection of insects, pests, weeds and rice plant samples. They presented their outputs by groups.

Armed with personal protective equipment and farming gear, the participants also learned to operate the riding and walk-behind transplanter, mechanical reaper, hand tractor, and rice combine harvester. They undertook

practicum on germination test, varietal test, physical purity test, and moisture content determination.

In addition to rice technologies, the TOT also tackled basic financial literacy, basic financial management, the five cs/ks of credit, farm planning and budgeting, principles of adult learning, communication skills, presentation skills, facilitation of farmer groups, as well as information communication technology (ICT) services in rice production. Each participant gave a 10-minute presentation on topics assigned to them, accepting the challenge to provide quality and effective presentations to their future farmer participants. Finally, they prepared their action plan for their respective local government unit and LSA. **Ma. Rafaela V. Bajaro**



Del Gallego Farmers Trained on Rice Pest & Diseases and Nutrient Management

DEL GALLEGO, Camarines Sur - "Sa wastong pamamahala ng peste at sustansiya ng palay, Masaganang Ani ay tiyak!" (Through proper management of pests and nutrition of rice, a bountiful harvest is assured!)

More than 20 rice farmers participated in DA-ATI Bicol's "Farmers Training on Rice Pest and Diseases and Nutrient Management Using Rice Crop Manager and Minus-One Element Technique" held at Barangay San Juan, Del Gallego, Camarines Sur last June 15-18, 2021. This is a project to the National Rice Program. The training aims to enhance the knowledge and skills of participants in rice pests and diseases and nutrient management using ICT diagnostic tools.

The training is in partnership with the Local Government of Del Gallego through its Municipal Agriculture Office headed by Engr. Alex



Rice farmers shown how to use the Minus-One Element Technique or MOET.

Idanan.

The participants were able to identify the major rice pests and diseases and their management options during the Agroecosystem Analysis (AESA). They have also demonstrated the use of the Minus One Element Technique (MOET) as part of the hands-on activity. Engr. Kristine O. Olila of DA-ATI Bicol, Mr. Alex Atian of the DA- Regional

Field Office 5, and Ms. Juliet B. Caringal of MAO served as the resource persons.

Strict health protocols were observed during the conduct of the activity. Each participant was provided with free alcohol, a face mask, and a face shield.

Kristine O. Olila

RCM Briefing Reaches Ragay

RAGAY, Camarines Sur - June 9, 2021, marked the first time the DA-ATI Bicol held a Rice Crop Manager briefing in the municipality of Ragay. The first time too in a Learning Site for Agriculture (LSA) in the Bicol Region.

The Rice Crop Manager is a web-based tool that provides rice farmers with a personalized crop and nutrient management recommendation for rice fields through a one-page printout and text messages to the phone of farmers. It aims to reduce production costs, increase yields, increase net income, and facilitate a profes-

sional extension service deploying appropriate information at correct times to farmers through information and communications technology (ICT).

Dr. Manuel Mendoza, the owner of the Christian Farmers Training Center in Brgy. Cabinitan where the briefing was held, was elated. "Kami ay naga-galak na ang una-unahang activity na ginanap pagkatapos na kami ay officially na-certified last February ay ang RCM briefing na to na kauna-uanghan din ginanap dito sa Ragay. Kami din natutuwa sa paglahok ng ating mga magsasaka sa aktibidad dahil ito ay patunay lamang na sila ay bukas ang kaisipan na matuto sa bagong

teknolohiya dulot ng RCM."

More than 20 farmers participated. They provided pertinent information which includes the number of farms, farm lot area, planting frequency, plant establishment, seed type, seed variety, seed source, water source, gross total harvest, among others.

After each interview, the farmer was given a printed recommendation that contains the amount, time, and type of fertilizers to be applied. Also, it includes guides on weed management, seed rate, and safe alternate wetting and drying.

Dante De Castro of the Municipal Agriculture Office remarked, "Malaking tulong ang ganitong activity ng ATI dahil nahihipnuan nito ang kakulangan ng aming opisina sa pangangalangan ng mga magsasaka sa Ragay. Napakalawak ng agriculture area ng Ragay pero kulang kami sa tao. Kaya natutuwa kami na narito ang ATI at ang LSA gaya ng CFTC na tumutuwang sa amin na magampanan ang aming tungkulin."

Strict health protocols were observed during the conduct of the activity. Each attendee was also provided with free alcohol, a face mask, and a face shield. **Isagani C. Valenzuela, Jr.**



Digital Farmers Program Training sa Bicol, Isinagawa



PILI, Camarines Sur -- Apatnapong (40) kalahok mula sa Camarines Sur ang nagtapos ng pagsasanay sa Digital Farmers Program (DFP) 101. Naganap ito sa pakikipag-tulungan ng Cental Bicol State University of Agriculture (CBSUA) at Carmel Farms sa DA-ATI Bicol.

Sa kanyang pagbisita sa Carmel Farms habang nagaganap ang DFP 101, ikinatuwa ni ATI Deputy Director Rosana Mula ang interes na pinakita ng mga magsasaka sa DFP. Mahalaga ang paggamit ng teknolohiya sa pagsasaka, diin ni Direktor Mula.

Ang nasabing pagsasanay ay

isinagawa noong ika-15 at ika-17 ng Hunyo sa kasalukuyang taon. Sampong (10) pirasong smartphones mula sa ATI ang ginamit ng mga kalahok na binubuo ng sampong (10) pares ng magsasaka at kabataan.

Nagsilbing Resource Person si Karlos Miguel Haber, Information Technology expert ng CBSUA, tungkol sa paggamit ng internet. Sina Christian Tosoc at Marjhan Ramboyoung ng DA-ATI ay nagturo tungkol sa smartphone at paggamit ng social media. Bahagi rin ng pagsasanay ang paggamit ng mga applications na makakatulong sa pagsasaka, tulad ng GPS Fields Area Measure, Rice Doctor, RCM, AccuWeather, Payong Pagasa, at eLearning.

Ang DFP ay itinataguyod ng DA-ATI, Smart Communications, at Manila Bulletin upang masolusyunan ang tinatawag na "digital divide" sa sektor ng pagsasaka, kung saan ang "information rich" ay mas lamang kesa sa "information poor" sa pagtuklas ng oportunidad sa pag-unlad.

Ang DFP ay nagbibigay-kakayahang sa mga magsasaka tungkol sa paggamit ng IT. Gayundin, hinihikayat rin nito ang kabataan na matuto tungkol sa pagsasaka. **Primalou B. Imperial**

RCEF-RESP Inter-Agency Consultation Meeting Held

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Emeteria Agritourism Farm, Ms. Carmelita Cervantes of Carmel-Agri Learning Farm, as well as Mr. Edgar A. Pesebre of Palayamanayon Ni Tiyo Edgar.

The Center Director Elsa A. Parot and Ms. Vivien Carable, Assistant Center director, headed the DA-ATI Bicol team. Also present were Mr. Joey A. Belarmino, Senior Agriculturist/Chief of Partnership and Accreditation Services Section, as well as Ms. Primalou B. Imperial, Information Officer III/Chief of Information Services Section.

Mr. Marcial T. Bustarga, Agriculturist II, represented DA-RFO in behalf of Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla.

Meanwhile, the TESDA officials included Ms. Ruth E. Dayawen, Provincial Director of TESDA-Albay; Mr. Alejandro R. Cortez, Provincial Director of TESDA-Camarines Sur; Mr. Arcangel T. Rodriguez, Provincial Director, and Mr. Ricardo Detecio, Supervising TESDA Specialist, of TESDA-Sorsogon.

Present also during the meeting were Ms. Marites R. Reyes and Mr. Jose N. Tormes of BPI-NSCQS; Ms. Edlin Kate Banton of PhilMech; Mr. Michael L. Satuito of PhilRice; as well as Ms. Rosalinda Belodo, Provincial Rice Program Coordinator, Ms. Eleanor O. Daep, Agricultural Center Chief III and OA Focal/Training Officer, and Ms. Cheryll O. Rebeta, Provincial Agriculturist of APAO. **Ma. Rafaela V. Bajaro**

BAFEN Holds 1st Online Consultation

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after the other to realize the objectives.

Mr. Emmanuel Orogo, Planning Officer II, tackled the ATI Bicol FY 2020 Best Practices and FY 2021 ESETS plan.

Each of the participating institutions and organizations then presented their respective FY 2020 Best Practices and FY 2021 ESETS plan.

The 2nd Quarter shall be on May 12, 2021, and the 4th Quarter on November 10, 2021. The 3rd Quarter meeting will be converted to a training which is scheduled on August 11-13, 2021.

Nida A. Hagos

DA-ATI Bicol Employees Hurdle IQA Course



Participating employees huddle during a workshop.

PILI, Camarines Sur -- From deficient to sufficient.

Twenty-six employees of DA-ATI Bicol have completed and passed the ISO 9001:2015 Internal Quality Auditing Course. Since 2017 when the center applied for ISO accreditation, it has had four internal auditors.

For three days from March 16 to 18, they underwent intensive training with workshops and exercises designed to understand the requirements of the audit based on ISO 19011:2018 standards. Aside from imbibing the roles and responsibil-

ities of an auditor, they have embraced the concept of an audit and its purpose as a management tool. And to hone their skills, they even designed and conducted mock audits.

Engr. Paul Mondoñedo, a long-time ISO consultant, served as the resource speaker.

An internal audit is performed by qualified employees at a planned interval to provide information on whether the quality management system conforms to the ISO and the organization's requirements, and to ensure it is effectively implemented and maintained.

DA-ATI has been certified by TÜV SÜD for fulfilling the requirements according to ISO 9001:2015 standards for its Quality Management System for the Development and Provision of Trainings, Knowledge Products and Services, Accreditation of Extension Services Providers, Scholarships, Alliance Building, National Extension System Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation.

DA-ATI Bicol is an ISO-certified organization since 2018. It has been re-certified last year and shall undergo a surveillance audit later this year. **Isagani C. Valenzuela, Jr.**

Bicolano Youth Qualifies as MAYA Intern

PILI, Camarines Sur -- To address the increasing gap in the development of the Philippine Agribusiness sector, improve matches between labor supply and demand, as well as ensure that the skillsets meet industry standards and global competitiveness, the Mentoring and Attracting Youth in Agribusiness (MAYA) was conceived.

Ms. Judy C. Rabosa formally received the Notice of Award as MAYA Program Intern under the Department of Agriculture – Agricultural Training Institute Bicol (DA-ATI Bicol) on March 10, 2021 at ATI-RTC V Compound, San Agustin, Pili, Camarines Sur. DA-ATI Bicol Center Director Elsa A. Parot conferred the award to Ms. Rabosa.

Ms. Rabosa will undergo corresponding management training with learning objective goals which include experience-based exposure. She will also receive monthly allowance which includes com-

munication allowance and travel insurance.

The 6-month internship program aims to develop competent, highly-skilled and employment-ready youthful workforce. Specifically, it was designed to: develop a young cadre of youth agribusiness leaders that are market-ready, have the necessary skillsets capabilities and, committed to excellence with the right attitude.

It will also advance the agency's youth in agriculture strategy; develop and deploy a young cadre of abled, competent, committed and jobready human resource pool; provide equal opportunities to poor but deserving students by creating career pathways and economic opportunities based on freedom of initiative and self-reliance; support growth and institutional development of farmers' cooperatives and associations (FCA) as well as micro and small enterprises in realizing food security, resiliency and

economic prosperity; and develop applicable training modules for the Agribusiness Development Academy (ADA). **Christian T.R. Tosoc**



DA-ATI Director Aton Visits Bicol, Tells Staff: “Chill Lang”



PILI, Camarines Sur – ‘Actually this is my first engagement since March 17, 2020, because of Covid. Nakulong ako ng isang taon sa Central Office. Kaya nang pinayagan na ng IATF ang mag-travel, sabi ko bisitahin ko kaya si Ma’am Elsa.’

This was the admission of DA-ATI Director Alfredo S. Aton to the delight and applause of Center Director Elsa Parot, her officers, and staff who are in full attendance during his much-awaited visit to the region since 2019 when the Center hosted the ATI Managers Association meeting.

He reported that ATI has the best performance among the attached agencies of the Department of Agriculture with a rating of 99%. This he attributed to the exemplary achievements of some Regional Training Centers which include that in Bicol.

He emphasized the need for teamwork and to avoid creat-

ing factions in the workplace. ‘This shall create distractions in work and will surely affect performance. Promote camaraderie instead.’

With the impending Mandanas ruling that mandates the transfer of national government function to the local government units, Director Aton reiterated that ATI shall be focusing on services for the Agricultural Extension Workers. ‘Mami-miss natin ang mga farmers,’ he added.

The Institute will not be implementing the banner programs except for the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF). Nevertheless, he said that DA has submitted a position paper to cushion the impact of the ruling in the agriculture sector.

In the end, he allayed the fears of the employees. ‘Huwag kayong matakot. Chill lang.’ **Isagani C. Valenzuela, Jr.**

From #Sarabay to #Sararo: DA-ATI Bicol Goes Full Blast for 2021

PILI, Camarines Sur - It may be reeling from the pandemic, disease outbreak, and natural catastrophes in the past year, but DA-ATI Bicol is raring to go this 2021.

Taking a cue from the ‘Panunumpa ng mga Kawani ng Gobyerno,’ DA-ATI Bicol Center Director Elsa A. Parot exhorted all the permanent and job order workers to remain ‘Tapat at Mahusay’ during the Operational Planning Workshop held at its office in Pili, Camarines last January 12-14, 2021.

The Covid-19 pandemic forced the institution to abandon its traditional training and other extension activities, which involve physical interaction with its stakeholders. Nonetheless, the center innovates by launching online distance learning (ODL) through its digital platform, the ATI Bicol #Sarabay Channel.

The innovation allowed DA-ATI Bicol to hold distance training in multiple locations and reach a more significant audience, even beyond the Philippine shore.

This year, with the relaxation of health restrictions, DA-ATI Bicol shall be holding a limited number of face-to-face training subject to health guidelines set by the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Diseases or IATF.

In addition to the online and social media training, other ODL approaches will be adopted such as the modular approach, radio broadcast, blended approach, and home-based training program.

During the workshop, streamlining and enhancing of some processes were discussed such as the creation of the training design, preparation of the Individual Performance and Commitment Report, (IPCR), purchase of goods and services, among others.

The ATI Bicol #Sarabay Channel will also be renamed to ATI Bicol Sarabay Channel by omitting the hashtag symbol.

In addition, the #Sarabay (together) that is used for corporate communication has been changed to #Sararo (together as one) and the addition of #TapatMahusay. **Isagani C. Valenzuela, Jr.**

Three Fridays to Less Stress

PILI, Camarines Sur – In three batches, the 56-strong DA-ATI Bicol manpower attended the one-day Seminar on Coping with Stress at Work conducted by Ms. Maricho Cuarteros-Cezar, resident psychologist and Training Specialist IV of Bicol Medical Center.

Extension services continuously evolve to more effectively respond to shifting challenges that extension workers and farmers face. As such, ATI personnel have to keep up its efforts as training arm of the Department of Agriculture. Varying levels of stressful situations form part and parcel of their work. The Covid-19 pandemic further intensified the demands for relevant services, as well as gen-

erated psycho-emotional pressures on individuals.

High levels of stress pose risks to emotional, mental and physical health.

Thus, the staff development activity on managing stress is a must for DA-ATI Bicol personnel. It aimed to foster a mutually supportive socio-psychological environment that is conducive to thinking clearly, functioning effectively, promote work-life integration so to fully enjoy both.

The stress-buster seminar series took place on March 5, 12 and 19, 2021 at the ATI Compound in Pili, Camarines Sur. **Primalou B. Imperial**



DA-ATI Bicol personnel attend the seminar on coping with stress at work, to better perform their tasks, promote work-life integration, and to fully enjoy both.



ATIng UMA

PAG-IBIG MUSIC VIDEO

May 10 - June 13



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