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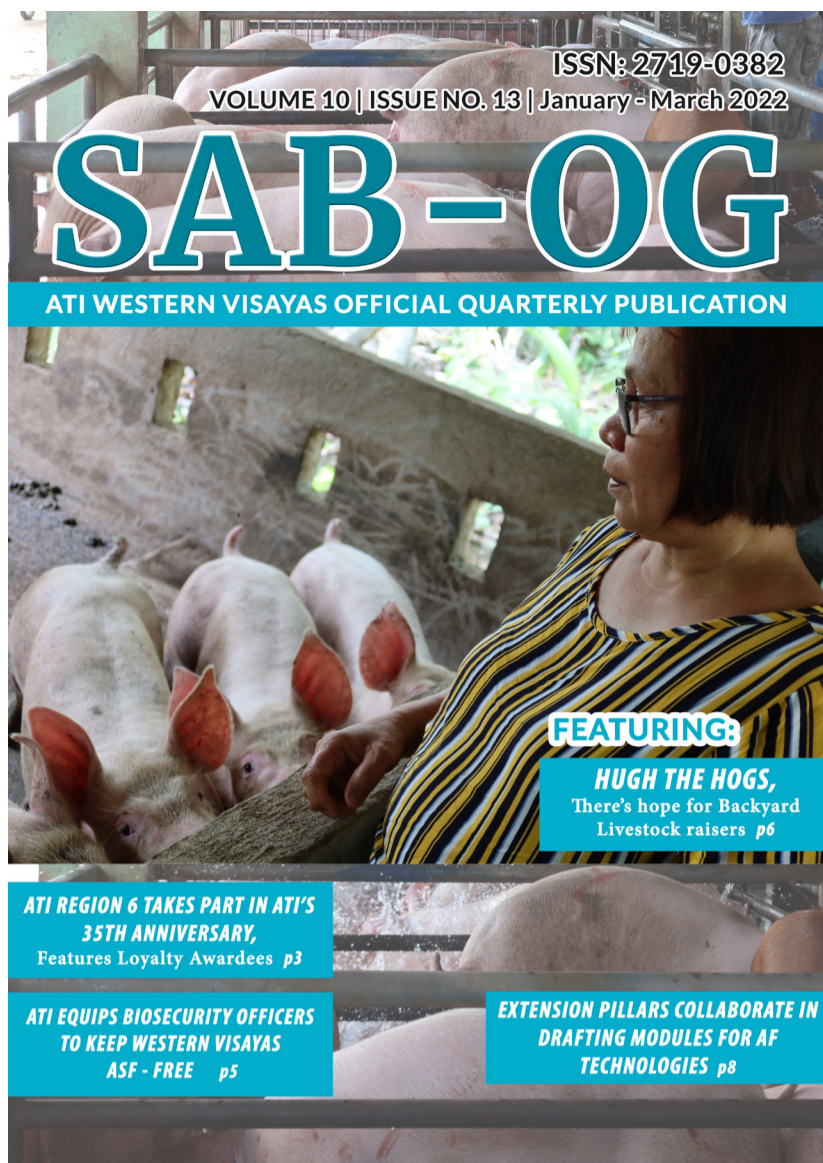
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About the Cover

This issue honors the contribution of women who serve as farmer leaders and mobilizers of their community.

Elma T. Peña, President of the Sibalom Livestock and Poultry Raisers Association (SILPRA), graces the cover alongside agriculture colleagues from Sibalom, Antique. Elma paves the way for women in agriculture to be catalysts of change.

ATI Region 6 supports Elma and all women who aim for change and food prosperity in their locality and in Western Visayas as a whole.



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ATI REGION 6 TAKES PART IN ATI'S 35TH ANNIVERSARY, FEATURES LOYALTY AWARDEES

By: Lielzel Margie Lou S. Bastian-Ocheda

BANGA, Aklan – As part of the nationwide’s 35th Founding Anniversary of the institute with the theme, “Innovating OneDA Agricultural Extension Strategies Beyond New Normal” from January 25-28, 2022, ATI in Region 6 (Western Visayas) joins the celebration through online platforms hosted by the Central Office that features the launching of the ATI Operations Manual, and the inauguration of the new elevator in the ATI-Central Office. The celebration also commence the 2022 webinar series dubbed as “Skill Up: ATI 35th Anniversary Webinar Specials”, and recognize the ATI loyalty awardees and the regional training centers with exemplary performance.

Agriculture Secretary William Dar during his message acknowledged the Institute’s role in the agricultural extension in the country and stressed its competence as capacity-builders in the industry. While Senator Cynthia Villar conveyed her untiring support to the agricultural endeavors and initiatives of the Institute. On the other hand, Dr. Rosana P. Mula, newly-appointed National Director, swore to perform better extension strategies concerning the OneDA. She also recognized the efforts and hard work of the Institute while working towards efficiency and timeliness despite the challenges and changes it faces.

On the same occasion, ATI in Region 6 honor the loyalty awardees namely Agustin S. Salanatin, Administrative Assistant II, and Melba N. Lanciso, Administrative Officer II/Supply Officer, for serving the public service for more than 30 and 40 years, respectively. Furthermore, the Center attended the FY2021 Annual Performance Review and FY2022 Commitment Signing in the next day. It then conducted the webinar entitled, “Block the Bugs: Management of the Rice Black Bug” with Ryan V. Rasgo, Chief of DA – Regional Crop Protection Center VI on January 27. The said webinar is part of the ATI 2022 Webinar Series Skill Up.

The ATI was established after the reorganization of the Bureau of Agricultural Extension, the Philippine Agricultural Training Council, and the Philippine Training Centers for Rural Development through Executive Order no. 116.



The loyalty awardees of ATI Region 6: Agustin S. Salanatin, Administrative Assistant II, and Melba N. Lanciso, Administrative Officer II/Supply Officer, serving the public service for more than 30 and 40 years, respectively.



Assistant Center Director Mary Ann A. Ramos and PMEU Chief Eraldgen Bernaldo attends the Ceremonial Signing of Commitment in behalf of Center Director Eden DLR Bautista.



The theme, “Innovating OneDA Agricultural Extension Strategies Beyond the New Normal” marks ATI’s 35th founding anniversary.



Special performances in the form of cheer and dance numbers showcased the culture and individuality of each region.



All anniversary ceremonies were conducted and attended virtually in compliance with health and safety standards.



Camaraderie and commitment: The ATI Region 6 team continues to work hand-in-hand to deliver excellent extension services beyond boundaries.

NEW LEARNING SITES FOR AGRICULTURE FOR 2022

By: Victorio De Joseph Jr.



Mavillo Z. Villorente, ATI Region 6's Senior Agriculturist, Dr. Eden DLR. Bautista, Center Director, Emily M. Revesencio, Training Specialist II, and Lyn G. Bantigue, Agriculturist II, awarded assistance to Angel S. Reyes III (left) and Alvin A. Barrios (right), at the Center's Administration Building.

AKLAN, Western Visayas - Granja La Verde Farm located at Sitio Hinangasan, Brgy. Lupit, Batan, Aklan, and Barrios Fruits and Vegetables Integrated Farm situated in Sitio Balili, Brgy. Bubog, Numancia, Aklan were named as the newest Learning Sites for Agriculture (LSA) in the Region.

Mavillo Z. Villorente, ATI Region 6's Senior Agriculturist, Dr. Eden DLR. Bautista, Center Director Emily M. Revesencio, Training Specialist II, and Lyn G. Bantigue, Agriculturist II, awarded the assistance worth Php150,000 each to the farm owners namely Angel S. Reyes III and Alvin A. Barrios at the Center's Administration Building.

The Granja La Verde Farm was established in the year 2015 with only 1,000.00 sqm. While, Barrios Fruits and Vegetables Integrated Farm was started last November 23, 2017, with a total farm area of 7,000.00 sqm. Both Learning Site Operators are advocates of the application of organic farming techniques. They produce high valued crops like salad greens, mushrooms, and culinary herbs. The pandemic opens a huge increase in demand for healthy food, particularly organic produce that became their motivation to continue expanding their farm. They also believe that other farmers were not their competitors instead their allies in exploring the vast opportunity of farming.

LEARNING SITE (LS) APPLICANT EVALUATED IN THE PROVINCE OF AKLAN

By: Eligrace Z. San Buenaventura



Alvin A. Barrios, Jr. farm owner together with Mavillo Villorente, PASS Section Chief, and Emily M. Revesencio, Training Specialist II of ATI Region 6, during the evaluation of the site.

NUMANCIA, Aklan – Dr. Eden DLR. Bautista, Center Director of ATI Region 6, leads the team from the Partnerships & Accreditation Services Section (PASS) with Mavillo Z. Villorente, Section Chief; Lyn G. Bantigue, Agriculturist II; and Emily M. Revesencio, Training Specialist II of Career Development & Management Services

Section (CDMSS) in assessing the farm applying for Learning Site for Agriculture (LSA).

The evaluators visited Barrios Fruits and Vegetables Integrated Farm, owned and managed by Alvin A. Barrios, Jr. at Brgy. Bubog, Numancia, Aklan. Upon evaluation, the team recommended that the site can be qualified to become one of the region's LSAs.

Mr. Barrios expressed his desire to continue advocating organic vegetable farming to serve the increasing number of consumers who primarily consume organic products.

The Learning Site for Agriculture (LSA) is where successful farmers will be partner with ATI and other agencies in implementing training and extension interventions, sharing their technologies right in their farms, and administering hands-on training. In line with this, ATI-RTC VI supports the establishment of a Learning Site for Agriculture (LSA); to reach aspiring farmers and empower them in their agricultural journey.

ATI REGION 6 AIMS AT PRODUCTIVITY THROUGH OPERATIONAL PLANNING WORKSHOP

By: Sheena Angelique D. Zante



Mary Ann A. Ramos, Assistant Center Director, encourages the team to maximize the resources provided by the agency in order to meet its targets and increase overall productivity.

BANGA, Aklan – With the priority on the Center's increased productivity, ATI Region 6 conducted a supplemental Operational Planning Workshop for Improved Productivity and Service Quality for FY 2022 last February 14-15, 2022 at the ATI Training Hall. The gathering was attended by all sections of the Center.

Highlights of the planning workshop include the presentation of the FY 2022 Work and Financial Plan for comprehensive reference, presentation of the 3rd Party Audit Findings, review of previously issued guidelines on when to communicate with suppliers upon the result of the evaluation, guidelines on operation and management of closed-circuit television system (CCTV), guidelines on transfer of knowledge, and direction on the conduct of training effectiveness survey.

The team also re-oriented themselves on the procedure of filling out the Statement of Assets, Liabilities, and Net Worth (SALN) form and points to remember in accomplishing their Individual Performance Commitment and Review (IPCR).

All staff was given the opportunity to prepare the following: Purchase Request, SALN, Training Design, Quality Objectives, and Risk Assessment Plan.

The gathering capped with discussions on other matters like the review of the Training and Other Activity Completion Report (TOACR) by the Project Officers, monitoring of targets, and monthly reports to be accomplished by sections.

A team-building activity on February 23-24, 2022, followed the said workshop to maximize the staff's cooperation and synergy for a dynamic implementation of projects in the year ahead.

FARM SITE EVALUATION CONDUCTED FOR LSA ESTABLISHMENT

By: Eligrace Z. San Buenaventura



Evaluators from ATI-RTC VI assess the farm site with the farm owner, Angel S. Reyes III of Granja La Verde Farm.

BATAN, Aklan – ATI Region 6 conducts one of the assessments for the establishment of the Learning Site for Agriculture (LSA) in Western Visayas at Barangay Lupit, Batan, Aklan. Angel S. Reyes III, the farm owner of Granja La Verde Farm, was oriented on the responsibilities of a Learning Site Cooperator wherein he must be willing to share their technologies right in their farm. His farm will serve as a partner in implementing training and extension interventions for hands-on activity and training. While, he can act and demonstrate as a trainer and resource person for various groups, and are willing to submit a periodic report to ATI Region 6.

The evaluators are from the Partnerships &

Accreditation Services Section (PASS) namely: Mavillo Villorente, Section Chief; Lyn G. Bantigue, Agriculturist II; and Emily M. Revesencio, Training Specialist II of Career Development & Management Services Section (CDMSS).

There are 69 recognized LSAs in the Region in the year 2021. As of the 31st of December, fifteen were accredited as Learning Sites with the following breakdown: Province of Antique (1); Province of Capiz (2); Province of Iloilo (3); Province of Aklan (5); and Province of Negros (4).



NEW LEARNING SITES OF REGION 6 EMERGE FROM CAPIZ

By: Eligrace Z. San Buenaventura



Dr. Eden DLR. Bautista, Center Director and Mavillo Z. Villorente, Senior Agriculturist together with Briddo V. Dorado of Bimnette Integrated Farm and Elenita B. Arroyo of Agdahon Agriventures Farm take a photo opportunity during the awarding.

BANGA, Aklan - Bimnette Integrated Farm located at Brgy. Tincupon, Panit-an and Agdahon Agriventures Farm situated in Brgy. Agadahon, Cuartero in Capiz were recognized as the new Learning Sites for Agriculture (LSA) in Western Visayas after the successful conduct of the assessment in the said farms last December 2021.

Dr. Eden DLR. Bautista, Center Director; Mavillo Z. Villorente, Senior Agriculturist; and Lyn G. Bantigue, Agriculturist II awarded the assistance worth Php150,000 to the farm-owners, namely: Briddo V. Dorado and Elenita B. Arroyo, at the Center's Training Hall on February 14, 2022.

Bimnette Integrated Farm has a total land area of 1.2 hectares with one hectare devoted to rice production while Agdahon Agriventures Farm has a total farm area of 1.5 hectares, which produces organically grown rice, herbs, and vegetables. Both farms showcase unique and different varieties of ornamental plants that are marketable in hotels, farm resorts, and other establishments.

ATI EQUIPS BIOSECURITY OFFICERS TO KEEP WESTERN VISAYAS ASF-FREE

By: Mary Ann A. Ramos



The trainee shows the blood samples she successfully collected from a pig, as one of the course requirements.

ILOILO, Western Visayas – Sixty-four selected livestock technicians contributed to sustain the “ASF-free Western Visayas” by attending the Training on Specimen Collection for Barangay Biosecurity Officers (BBOs) in the five districts of Iloilo Province this March 2022.

They were trained on collecting specimens for laboratory testing, appropriate handling of specimen and restraining technique, and preparation of animals for collection. Moreover, they will be deputized as Biosecurity Officers to conduct regular farm visits in the barangays for ASF surveillance, health monitoring & farm compliance with biosecurity protocols under the supervision of the PVO/CVO/MAO.

“African swine fever does not always manifest with the entire set of clinical signs. Clinical diagnosis can be difficult during the early stages of the disease, or when small numbers of animals are affected. Diagnosing ASF is often speculative, for symptoms and may be confused with those of other diseases and/or conditions. No diagnosis is conclusive until confirmed by the laboratory.” said Dr. Lerisa E. Balopenos, Chief of the Regional Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (RADDL), during her lecture.

Meanwhile, Dr. Jonic F. Natividad, Chief of Regulatory Division and Team Leader of ASF Task Force in Region 6 in his lecture stressed that for the “Bantay ASF sa Barangay Program” to succeed, all local government units and stakeholders must be engaged in the surveillance, monitoring and area risk assessment that include mapping and geotagging of all farms in the barangay.

Dr. Darel B. Tabuada, Iloilo Provincial Veterinarian explained the guidelines in the regulation of animal movement and control of disease during his lecture. “ASF prevention program must include the strategies on the creation of the ASF Task Force, strict implementation of border control, information and education campaign, and backyard farm-based biosecurity measures,” he further mentioned. Some of BBOs’ duties and responsibilities include the conduct of farm and area biosecurity evaluation and assessment, sample collection, and weekly ASF negative monitoring reports.

ATI REGION 6 EMBARKS FY2022 WITH OPERATIONAL PLANNING WORKSHOP



Dr. Eden DLR. Bautista, Center Director, presents the Institute's Policy Direction for

BANGA, Aklan – ATI Region 6 outsets the year with the FY2022 Operational Planning Workshop at the ATI Training Hall on January 13, 2022.

More than 30 Staff of the said office took part in this one-day activity. Dr. Eden DLR. Bautista, Center Director, elaborated the Institute's Policy Direction with highlights on the OneDA approach and the forthcoming implementation of the Mandanas Law. Aside from this, some concerns on financial aspects, procurement matters, and Continuing Professional Development Accreditation System (CPDAS) were also addressed.

In the afternoon, they were grouped according to their sections to proceed with scheduling and assignment of targets for the year, for the final schedule of activities. This activity also served as the first general assembly of the staff for this year.

Hugh the Hogs. There's hope for

By: Catheryn



As an active leader, Elma's daily activities is constant communication to its associates, the local government unit, and stakeholders of the swine industry.

For a woman who was struck badly by the pandemic, the backyard raising of livestock is still a profitable venture for Filipino families. It helps provide for their household needs and even helps in sending children to school. Commonly, hog raising for swine production is a multi-million business in the country and is the largest among the livestock and poultry industries.

Sixty-two years old Elma Peña invested in backyard hog raising and believes that there is a bright future for the hog industry. This conviction has fueled her dream to create interventions and opportunities for hog raisers in her community.

This energetic community leader hails from Egaña, Sibalom, Antique. She is married to Domingo Peña and a loving mother to her three children.

In 1989, the family moved from Metro Manila to Elma's hometown in Sibalom, Antique when the children were still in elementary school. Immediately, they started farming on the land lent to them by Elma's brother. They constructed a pigpen and started their backyard hog-raising venture on another lot also owned by her sibling.

Children were also involved in hog raising. The eldest child had even assisted during the birthing of the sows. Eventually, the family was able to acquire a boar in addition to their hogs. This backyard raising of hogs helps Elma and her husband send their children to school.

For many years, Elma juggles hog raising and work. She has worked as a contractual employee at the Antique Provincial Population Office and the Social Security System until 1999. Upon retiring from work, she focused on farming and treated it as a business venture. They managed to maintain 8 sow-level backyard raising, targeting 80-100 piglets a year. Income of which sustained the financial needs of their three children in college.

Volunteer Works

Elma has a strong agriculture background and loves to volunteer for the community. As a child, she was exposed to backyard gardening and poultry raising. She remembers harvesting their crops and poultry products and selling them in the neighborhood and at school. Growing up, she became a 4Her and was involved in various activities in agriculture and fisheries development in the country.

As a woman, she also became the president of the Rural Improvement Club (RIC) of Antique - a non-government organization involving women, uplifting their living standards and making them effective and productive partners of the government in community development.

For 20 years, she served as the chairperson of the Provincial Agriculture and Fisheries Council (PAFC) of Antique and in 2020 she became the chairperson of the Regional Agriculture and Fisheries Council (RAFC). This volunteer works as PAFC and RAFC chairperson enables her to use her voice to raise the issues and concerns of her fellow farmers, particularly the livestock raisers.

During these times, Elma also improved her capacities as a volunteer and a leader by joining various training programs provided by the Department of Agriculture, particularly by the Agricultural Training Institute. She has joined training on leadership, bookkeeping, root crops processing, Community Organizing, capacity building, and various agricultural technologies among others. The latest training that she is part of is the Digital Farmers Program, that equipped her with the knowledge and skills on the use of digital tools for better farming decisions and higher income.

The voluntary work that she does has helped her become abreast of the latest technologies and interventions in agriculture and fisheries. As a chairperson, she was also able to help acquire funds for her beloved association of the hog raisers in Sibalom.



As the dynamic president of the association Elma regularly appears at the livestock market to make sure that hogs being sent to Metro Manila are all in good shape.

The Rise of Silpra

Livestock raising is one of the leading sources of income for farmers in Sibalom. However, middlemen take control of the prices of livestock in the area. This made the local livestock raisers suffer for low farm gate prices were low. To put an end to this, Elma gathered the livestock raisers in the community and organized the Sibalom Livestock and Poultry Raisers Association (SILPRA) in 2018. The membership fee was then at Php50.00. Later in 2019, SILPRA was registered in the Department of Labor and Employment. Initially, it has more than 80 members.

Aside from getting rid of the control of middlemen in the price of livestock in the local market, SILPRA was organized to widen the livestock market, elevate the lives of the livestock raisers, and aid in the community development of the province.

Challenges and Wins

In its early operation, SILPRA was faced with challenges. In 2019 the association was threatened with the African Swine Fever (ASF) outbreak but the association acted quickly to protect their livestock industry.

As an association SILPRA has consistently worked with the Provincial Veterinary Office (PVO), Provincial Agriculture Office (PAO) of Antique, and the Office of the Municipal Agriculture to carry out strict monitoring, surveillance, implementation of biosecurity measures, and information dissemination in the community to contain the ASF.

In the farmer's backyard, regular disinfection is practiced. Trucks used to transport hogs are decontaminated. The livestock market is also disinfected once a week. Another challenge came when the pandemic started. Pre-pandemic, SILPRA delivers 300-500 heads of hogs to Boracay three times a week. When community lockdown was imposed to control the spread of the Covid-19 virus, delivery of hogs was stopped. A drastic drop in the price of hogs ensued, live weight kilo of hogs was only at Php75.00-Php80.00.

Elma is a firm believer that there is always hope despite dire circumstances. When the local market was affected by the pandemic and they had lost their local regular clients. With the help of the Department of Agriculture and the local government unit, she took the initiative to look for other markets of hogs. A buyer from Metro Manila came forward since there is a shortage of pork meat due to the ASF outbreak in Luzon. As Western Visayas is one of the regions in the country that is free from ASF, the association used this advantage to consolidate hogs for delivery to buyers

For Backyard Livestock Raisers

M. Villorente

outside the region, specifically to Metro Manila.

With proper coordination with the Municipal Agriculture Office (MAO), SILPRA was able to send 80 heads of hogs for its first shipment to Metro Manila and 160 heads for the second shipment at Php108/kg of live weight. Currently, SILPRA ships about 4000 hogs monthly to Metro Manila which contributed millions of pesos to the economy of the province.

With this effort, the hog industry in Sibalom started to thrive despite the restrictions brought about by the ASF outbreak and the pandemic.

Silpra's Income-Generating Feed Mill

Aside from the consolidation of livestock, SILPRA also operates the feed mill facility that produces feeds for livestock and poultry animals. A PHP7.5-million feed mill facility was acquired by the association from the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Animal Industry (DA-BAI) and turned into an income-generating project.



SILPRA's PHP7.5 million income-generating feed mill facility provides a livelihood for its members and a cheaper feeds option for the swine raisers in the community.

SILPRA started milling feeds for livestock and poultry animals in Sibalom in October 2021 after a successful dry run in August 2021. Starter and grower feeds are milled in the facility using their formulation composed of rice bran, corn, and high protein concentrate (HPC) powder.

SILPRA feeds are sold at PHP1,380 for a 50-kilo bag of grower feed while a bag of 50-kilo starter feed is sold at PHP1,430. Their product is cheaper compared with those being sold in the commercial market. Commercially, a bag of the 50-kilo grower feeds is available at PHP1,490 while the starter feeds is at PHP1,675. Using SILPRA feeds helps hog raisers save a lot of money and gain more profit in their backyard project. Feed products of SILPRA are available not only for its members but are also offered for other interesting livestock and poultry raisers in the province.



Consolidated hogs from various barangays in Sibalom and nearby municipalities are being prepared for shipment to Metro Manila.

A Bright Future Ahead

SILPRA has now more than 400 hog-farmer members from various parts of Antique. Elma shared that they have to modify the association's by-laws to accept members from other municipalities in the province. Its membership extends to municipalities of San Remigio, Belison, Bugasong, Hamtic, Anini-y, Tibiao, Tobias Fornier, and Barbaza. The majority of the members are backyard hog raisers.

With the help from PAO, PVO, and MAO, SILPRA is looking forward to converting their association into a cooperative to help more farmers and raisers in the community.

SILPRA is also working on its partnership with the University of Antique for the advancement of its feeds formulation. The plan also includes supplying slaughtered livestock around and outside the region when the slaughterhouse in Sibalom is upgraded into "Class AA." They even dream of supplying pork in a box upon reaching the "Class AAA" in the future.

Meanwhile, in her 60's, Elma is still an active president of SILPRA and a Chairperson of

Western Visayas RAFC. She spends her time and energy to build a stable and profitable livestock industry in the province of Antique, specifically in Sibalom. Despite her busy schedule she and her husband still venture into the backyard raising hogs and broilers. For she believes that there is a bright prospect for the hog industry of Sibalom.

Despite the challenges that she encountered as a woman and as a leader, she stays confident and motivated for she always knows that better days lie ahead. She looks forward to constantly helping the members of her beloved association and the community and will continue to seek possible interventions to improve the lives of farmers specifically the hog raisers.

She vows to always stick to her goal: to give hope to the livestock raisers in the province of Antique, especially the hog raisers.

"To my fellow farmers, don't lose hope. Be open to any ideas and new technologies to uplift our livestock industry. Keep on learning and share what you've learned," was her heartfelt message to the hog raisers like her.



Optimistic about the future of the swine industry in her community, Elma performs her day-to-day activity with a smile and vigor.

EXTENSION PILLARS COLLABORATE IN DRAFTING MODULES FOR AF TECHNOLOGIES

By: Vianney T. Ojerio



Dynamic Collaboration. The teams of Herbs Processing (back) and Organic Agriculture (front) gets productive during the first day of the workshop, in order to complete the first few chapters of their respective modules.

MALAY, Aklan- Twenty participants completed the Module Development Workshop for Agricultural and Fisheries Extensionists on March 28-31, 2022, at Boracay Tropics Resort Hotel, Boracay Island, Malay, Aklan. Five initial drafts of modules for agriculture and fisheries technologies were developed.

The workshop was attended by extensionists from various institutions representing the pillars of extension: national government agencies (NGAs), local government units (LGUs), and state universities and colleges (SUCs). This is a collaborative effort of developing modules to be used by the LGUs in implementing training programs at the grassroots.

After the four-day workshop, the participants articulated concepts on training module development, enumerated and described components of the ATI training module format, performed effective writing skills in developing different parts of the module, and presented their initial drafts. Theresa Aurora B. Cosico, Chief of the Training and Curriculum Development Section of the Career Development Management Division from ATI-Central Office, was the sole resource person for the workshop. She discussed topics on Introduction to Module Development, Spicing Up the Module, and Document Packaging. Five initial drafts of modules were presented: (1) Module on Culinary Herbs Production, (2) Module of Culinary Herbs Processing, (3) Module on Organic Fertilizer Making, (4) Module on Social Mobilization, and (5) Module on IEC Development.

“This workshop is timely, especially for us in the academe. It was both a challenge and an enlightenment,” said Josephine Pajo, Associate Professor of Aklan State University. “Because of the pandemic, we were required to prepare modules, or I would call it, “lecture compilation”. Through this training, we learned the different parts of the module, which we can adopt and will allow us to transform our “lecture compilation” into a real module. In this workshop, amidst the differences in terms of agencies, degrees, and expertise, participants are actively contributing to the discussion, and everyone is collaborating.”. Assistant Center Director Mary Ann A. Ramos, during her inspirational message, underscored the relevance of the workshop, especially to the local government units who will become the end-user of the modules that were developed. She also recognized the collaboration of the extension pillars, particularly the Aklan State University professors who served as subject matter specialists.

Among the best practices emanating from the training include collaboration among various institutions, incorporation of creative structured learning exercises, and proper sequencing of the topics and organization of workshops and activities. Participants submitted their re-entry plans and initial draft of modules, to be monitored by the training management. Among the agreements include inputting of additional information (for lessons), revision, finalization, and packaging of the modules. After which, it will be evaluated and presented to the LGUs for adoption.

NEGROS OCCIDENTAL CONCLUDES SOA SRA SEASON 1

By: Sheena Angelique D. Zante



The “Abanse Negrense” campaign was cried in celebration of the success of rice farmers during the awarding ceremony.

TALISAY CITY, Negros Occidental – After a series of postponements due to unforeseen events, Negros Occidental successfully mounted its SOA-SRA Provincial Ceremonial Mass Graduation and Awarding Ceremony last February 17, 2022, at Nature’s Village Resort. The commencement was attended by Local Government Unit officials, SOA-SRA Coordinators, selected farmer-graduates, Department of Agriculture-Regional Field Office 6 (DA-RFO6), DA – PhilRice, and ATI Region 6.

The commencement and awarding ceremony confirmed 1,900 farmer graduates from the first season of SOA-SRA, which launched last 2021. The graduates hailed from 25 cities and municipalities.

Through the initiative of LGU Negros Occidental and the Office of the Provincial Agriculturist, the Outstanding SOA-SRA Farmer Graduates were recognized based on the number of technologies adopted as manifested in the standing crop (40%), management skills and technical knowledge (20%), learning attitude and pattern of decision-making (20%) and farm record-keeping (20%). The Outstanding SOA-SRA Farmer-Graduates are Cornelia Santiana of Cadiz City, Leonardo Gubat of Sagay City, and Arnulfo Lapastura of Sipalay City. Cash prizes such as Php35,000; Php25,000; and Php15,000 were given to the outstanding SOA-SRA Farmer Graduates, respectively. While, Php5, 000 cash and portable Bluetooth speakers were also awarded to the respective municipal awardees as an additional incentive.

Certificates of Recognition and Participation were also granted to the participating cities and municipalities.

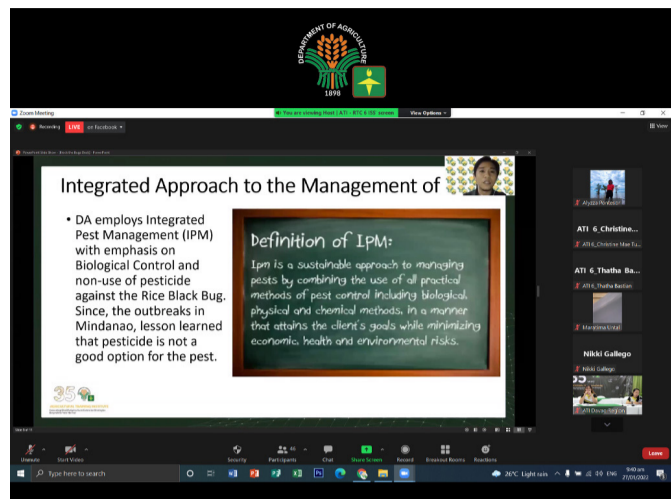
“ATI Region 6 would like to extend its gratitude to the unwavering support of Dr. Dina Genzola our OIC-Provincial Agriculturist, our Provincial Coordinator, Dr. Mary Ann Ordinario, the information services and office of Ms. Lucille [Perartilla], and the LGU coordinators whose love and dedication played a great part in the development of our farmers, and over-all, a higher yield for the province,” asserted Nicolasita Gallego, Information Officer III of ATI Region 6.

Also present were Mayor Salvador Escalante Jr. of Cadiz City and Sangguniang Panlalawigan Member and Committee Head on Agriculture Andrew Montelibano. Furthermore, DA-RFO 6 was represented by Regional Information Officer James Earl Ogatis and Supervising Science Research Specialist Albert Christian Suñer attended for DA – PhilRice.

The SOA-SRA was aired over DYEZ Aksyon Radyo Bacolod 684 kHz.

ATI REGION 6 LAUNCHES FIRST WEBINAR FOR 2022

By: Liezel Margie Lou S. Bastian-Ocheda



Ryan V. Rasgo, Chief of DA – Regional Crop Protection Center VI, introduces the Integrated Pest Management to the participants of the Block the Bugs: A webinar on the Management of the Rice Black Bug (RBB).

BANGA, Aklan – ATI Region 6 launches its first webinar this year on January 27, 2022, via ZOOM live-streamed via Center’s Facebook Page dubbed as “Block the Bugs: A webinar on the Management of the Rice Black Bug (RBB)” as part of the 2022 Webinar Series across ATI Network entitled, “Skill Up: ATI 35th Anniversary Webinar Specials.”

The webinar started at exactly 9:00 AM with more than 100 participants from all over the country. Nicolasita G. Gallego, Information Services Section (ISS) Chief/Information Officer III, graced the virtual floor on behalf of Dr. Eden DLR. Bautista, Center Director, quoting the new role of ATI as capacity-builders per Agriculture Secretary William Dar. She then introduced the distinguished resource person of the said activity in the person of Ryan V. Rasgo, Chief of DA – Regional Crop Protection Center VI.

Mr. Rasgo discussed the RBB that includes the insect pest’s scientific background, history, morphology, and management options. He emphasized the use of Biological Control specifically the application of *Metarhizium Anisopliae* (green muscardine fungus) in eradicating the RBB. He also encouraged the active participation of the members of the community in employing Integrated Pest Management to such pests.

In closing, Mary Ann A. Ramos, Assistant Center Director, took the opportunity to acknowledge the unwavering support of all stakeholders and clients of the institute, particularly partners from the Region and LGUs in facilitating extension endeavors in Western Visayas.

ATI EXPANDS ITS EXTENSION SERVICES WITH THE THREE NEWLY ESTABLISHED FITS CENTERS

By: Christine Mae B. Tubera



Information technology services are now ready for the agricultural stakeholders of Valderrama, Antique.

ANTIQUÉ, Western Visayas – ATI Region 6 expands its extension services through the establishment of three Farmers’ Information and Technology Services (FITS) Centers in the municipalities of Bugasong, Valderrama, and San Jose de Buenavista, Antique.

The respective Municipal Mayors, Office of the Municipal Agriculture (OMA) Staff, Local Farmer Technicians (LFT), and Municipal Agriculture and Fishery Council (MAFC) attended the inauguration and turning over of catalytic fund worth Php 100,000.00 last February 10, 2022.

Freddie Vista, Municipal Agriculturist, of OMA-Bugasong expressed, “this program will have a big impact on our farmers and clientele in terms of technologies. We extend our support and commitment to this long-overdue project,” during the turn-over ceremony in their municipality.

Meanwhile, Nicolasita G. Gallego, Information Officer III/Chief, ISS of ATI Region 6, presented the overview of roles, and responsibilities of the FITS Centers, especially on the e-Learning courses, the access to Digital Agriculture Applications, and IEC development.

As a provider of information service, FITS provides IEC materials in different formats such as print (primer, comics, leaflets, and bulletins), audio-visual, broadcast, and e-based media. Additionally, it responds to client needs in terms of technology clinic, training, caravans, sale of planting materials, linkage, and enterprise development as its technological function. It is a one-stop service facility that is made accessible to a large number of farmers, entrepreneurs, and other clients in the locality.

WOMEN ENCOURAGED TO RISE IN ATI REGION 6’s GAD SYMPOSIUM

By: Sheena Angelique D. Zante



ATI Region 6, Local Government Units, representatives from the academe, and agricultural extensionists huddle to celebrate the success and empowerment of all women.

BANGA, Aklan – To inspire rural women, Local Government Units, and extension service professionals, the ATI Region 6 Gender and Development Symposium was carried out in a full-day gathering last March 21, 2022, at the ATI Training Hall. The event was dubbed, “GAD Symposium: Women Rising Above the Tides of Life”.

The symposium generally discussed the importance of women’s empowerment in all aspects of their lives. Salient points and features of the Magna Carta for Women were presented by Lorna T. Cawaling of the Aklan Gender and Development Commission (AGADC). Contributions of different women in their respective fields were also presented by Ena Marie O. Dizon, Instructor from the University of the Philippines Mindanao; Myla Beatriz A. Gregorio, Volunteer from LATCH Los Baños; Alma C. Gorero, Extension Service Consultant; and Elma C. Peña, President of the Sibalom Livestock and Poultry Raisers Association.

Further event highlights include Food Processing for a Healthy Family Life by Myrna L. Guarino, Owner of Myrna’s Food Products.

“We believe that the Women’s Month Celebration is a venue to highlight women’s achievements and to discuss continuing Gender and Development issues and concerns, as well as challenges and commitments. And so, we highly appreciate the presence of everyone who committed their time to this event. We hope everyone will learn from the experiences of our speakers, and be able to apply the lessons in their daily lives,” shared Dr. Eden DLR Bautista, ATI Region 6 Center Director.

The event was conducted in line with the celebration of National Women’s Month and was streamed live via ATI Region 6’s Facebook and Youtube pages.

RCEF's TRAINING OF TRAINERS FOR FY 2022 BEGINS IN AKLAN

By: Jefflor L. Dela Cruz



The participants perform the return demonstration on Minus-One Element Technique (MOET) during the practicum.

BANGA, Aklan – “Thank you to ATI! This training is difficult to conduct but you have done it impressively. From someone who came from a very distant field, I appreciate the learnings, the importance of agriculture, and the bond of the group,” expressed Paul Anthony Prado, Trainer of Meliton Integrated Organic Farm, and one of the 30 participants of Training of Trainers on the Production of High-quality Inbred Rice and Seeds, and Farm Mechanization that runs from March 1-12, 2022 at ATI Training Hall, ASU Compound during his impression.

Mary Ann A. Ramos, ATI Region 6's Assistant Center Director, stressed during the Opening Program that one of the goals for the next 12 days is for them to become the new batch of ATI-produced quality trainers.

The participants of the said activity are composed of Agricultural Extension Workers (AEWs) and Learning Sites (LS) and Farm School Trainers from the provinces of Aklan and Iloilo. Lectures on Transformational Leadership, Basics of Financial Literacy, Facilitation, Presentation and Communication Skills, Training Management, PalayCheck System and its Key Checks, Machinery Operation and Safety, Financial Analysis, Agro-Ecosystem Analysis (AESAs), Minus One Element Technique (MOET), Double-mulching Technique (DMT), and Policies and Guidelines on Seed Certification were discussed in the first 10 days of the activity. Actual driving and operation of different farm machinery like a four-wheel tractor with rotavator, walk-behind transplanter, and combined harvester were also performed. Moreover, they were required to present a 10-minute presentation during their microteaching activity to assess their readiness and to practice the knowledge and skills that they acquired from the training. This will also prepare them for the actual implementation of the said training in their respective communities.

“If opportunity doesn't knock your door, make your own door,” said Dr. Eden DLR. Bautista, ATI Region 6's Center Director, during the Closing Ceremony. Additionally, she congratulated the 30 strong completers and challenged them to reproduce the seeds that the ATI sowed to them.

RICE CROP MANAGER (RCM), AN AID FOR THE RICE FARMERS' BURDEN ON SKYROCKETING COST OF FERTILIZER

By: Christine Mae B. Tubera



Norma Y. Tanguanco, one of the participants, delivers her impression after attending the one-day RCM Briefing Orientation in Malinao, Aklan.

MALINAO, Aklan - “This RCM Briefing gave us a lot of ideas on how to improve our rice farming production, despite that we are members of the Farmers' Association, our technologies were obsolete. But through the dissemination of this briefing, we were renewed of the new technology, new ways of agriculture and farming.” expressed Norma Y. Tanguanco, one of the rice farmers from Brgy. Malandayon, Malinao, Aklan, who participated during the RCM Briefing and Orientation on March 22, 2022.

The skyrocketing cost of fertilizer and increasing concerns on its availability, high cost of other inputs, low price of palay, lack of capital, labor problem, lack of postharvest facilities, pest and diseases, and irrigation system is a common problem encountered by our rice farmers in the country today. The high cost of inputs can entail high capital for farmers to make them decide to reduce their fertilizer usage that is not following the prescribed amount to increase their yield resulting in low production.

With the efficient use of fertilizer, pesticides, and proper management of rice fields, these problems can be addressed. Through the result of research and studies, the Rice Crop Manager (RCM) has developed. It is a collaborative project developed by DA and IRRI that was previously transferred and managed by DA-PhilRice. It is a web-based comprehensive decision-making tool to support increasing the yield and income of rice farmers to sustain the rice sufficiency of the country.

This activity aims to equip the rice farmers with the knowledge and skills on the efficient use of RCM and enable them to register in Farmer and Farm lot Registration to generate and acquire RCM recommendations for their next cropping. Each RCM recommendation is customized to match the field size and needs of rice-growing conditions of an individual farmer. This information on managing their rice crop is disseminated every cropping season wherein the right timing, right source, and the right amount of fertilizer are suited to the needs of their field.

The same activity was conducted on March 24, 2022, in Hamtic, Antique.

TRAINING INTEROPERABLE DIGITAL PLATFORM RCMAS V4.0 FOR RICE CROP MANAGERS OF AKLAN AND CAPIZ

By: Jonh Flor Emmanuel V. Salmorin

BANGA, Aklan – “This training would help us agricultural extension workers and farmers alike. The new version of RCMAS would prevent the dangers of overusing inorganic chemicals and at the same time would help us in saving resources,” said Jason Talco of LGU-Numancia, one of the 24 Agricultural Extension Workers from Aklan and Capiz that participated in the Training of Trainers on Rice Crop Manager Advisory Service v.4.0 held at ASU Conference Hall, Aklan State University Compound on March 14-17, 2022.

The four-day activity involved an overview of the RCM Advisory Service v4.0 (RCMAS), processing RCMAS through online and offline service options, troubleshooting the application, measuring of farm lot using GPS, field visit, registration of farm lot and farmer in the system, presentation of action/re-entry plans, and RCM and SSNM basic fertilizer computation.

“We need to evolve, we need to get out from the modality we are comfortable in, we need to be better to give better service to our farmers,” stated Nicolasita G. Gallego, ATI Region 6’s RCM Project Officer, as she challenged the Rice Crop Managers in giving their service in the community.

Rice Crop Manager Advisory Services v 4.0 is a digital agriculture application for improved crop and farm data management. It uses digital technology to help and aid farmers with site-specific crop and nutrient management recommendations for their rice fields. The said application integrates agricultural production through recommended fertilizer application rates in print or through text messages straight to their mobile phones.

RCMAS 4.0 is readily available to download on Google Playstore.



Participants perform a demonstration of measuring farm lot using GPS, a required data in registering farmers in the RCMAS App.

IMPROVING SERVICES IN RICE PROGRAM THROUGH RECOGNIZING ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ASSESSING TARGETS

By: Jeflor L. Dela Cruz

BANGA, Aklan – “I believe in ATI because they gave us very good direction. This results in a great performance of Region 6. In Antique, we are 207% self-sufficient in terms of rice because ATI trained us well. Whatever happens, even there will be changes in the administration, we will still be together in helping our fisherfolks and farmers,” said Nicolasito S. Calawag, Provincial Agriculturist, OPA-Antique, one of the 22 participants who participated in the 2022 Rice Program Consultation and Planning Workshop held at ATI Training Hall, ASU Compound on March 16-17, 2022.

The participants of the said activity were composed of Provincial Agriculturists, Provincial Rice Program Coordinators, Department of Agriculture-Agricultural Program Coordinating Office (DA-APCO), DA Representatives, and ATI Learning Site Operators in the Region.

Each implementing agency presented its FY 2021 Accomplishments and FY 2022 Plans and Targets. Issues and concerns were also identified, discussed, and leveled off some workable solutions and recommendations. Updates and interventions were also shared to further improve the implementation of the said program.

Mark Lester C. Gamboa, Agriculturist II of DA-RFO VI also presented the status of Rice Industry Situation in Western Visayas. Based on his discussion, some of the major factors that influenced the low yield per unit area performance in the Region are as follows: the majority of the farmers will not take the risk in applying appropriate technology (right amount of farm inputs) during the first semester due to inadequate irrigation water and the ratio of farmer per agricultural extension worker is 201:1 that makes it difficult in providing extension services especially training/orientation with regards to good agricultural practices that could enhance farmers’ capacity in boosting yield/production.

As an output, the participants did the workshop by identifying some proposed training/activities for FY2023-2025 for Rice Program.



Mark Lester C. Gamboa, Agriculturist II of DA-RFO VI presenting the status of Rice Industry Situation in Western Visayas.

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