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ATI WESTERN VISAYAS OFFICIAL QUARTERLY PUBLICATION



Western Visayas produces new set of Seed Inspectors

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Aklan bags the top in the ATI Region 6's Three-Minute Speech Contest

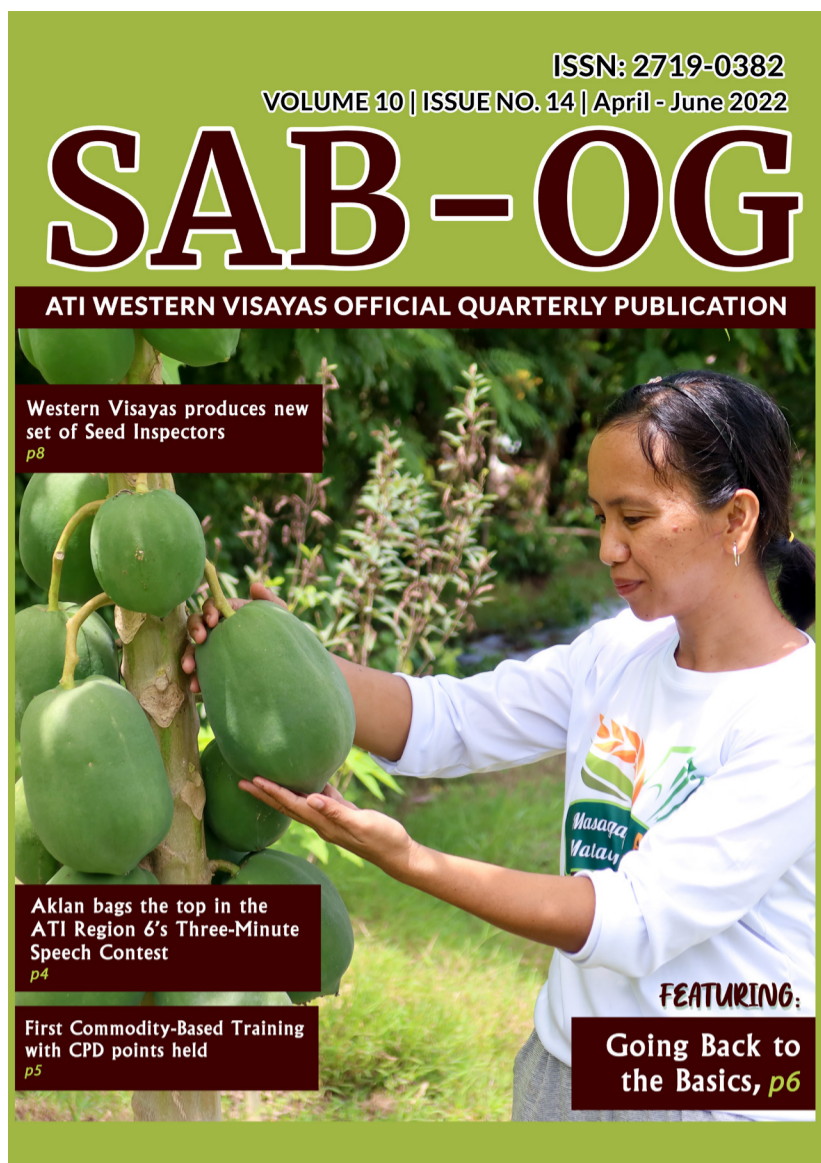
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First Commodity-Based Training with CPD points held

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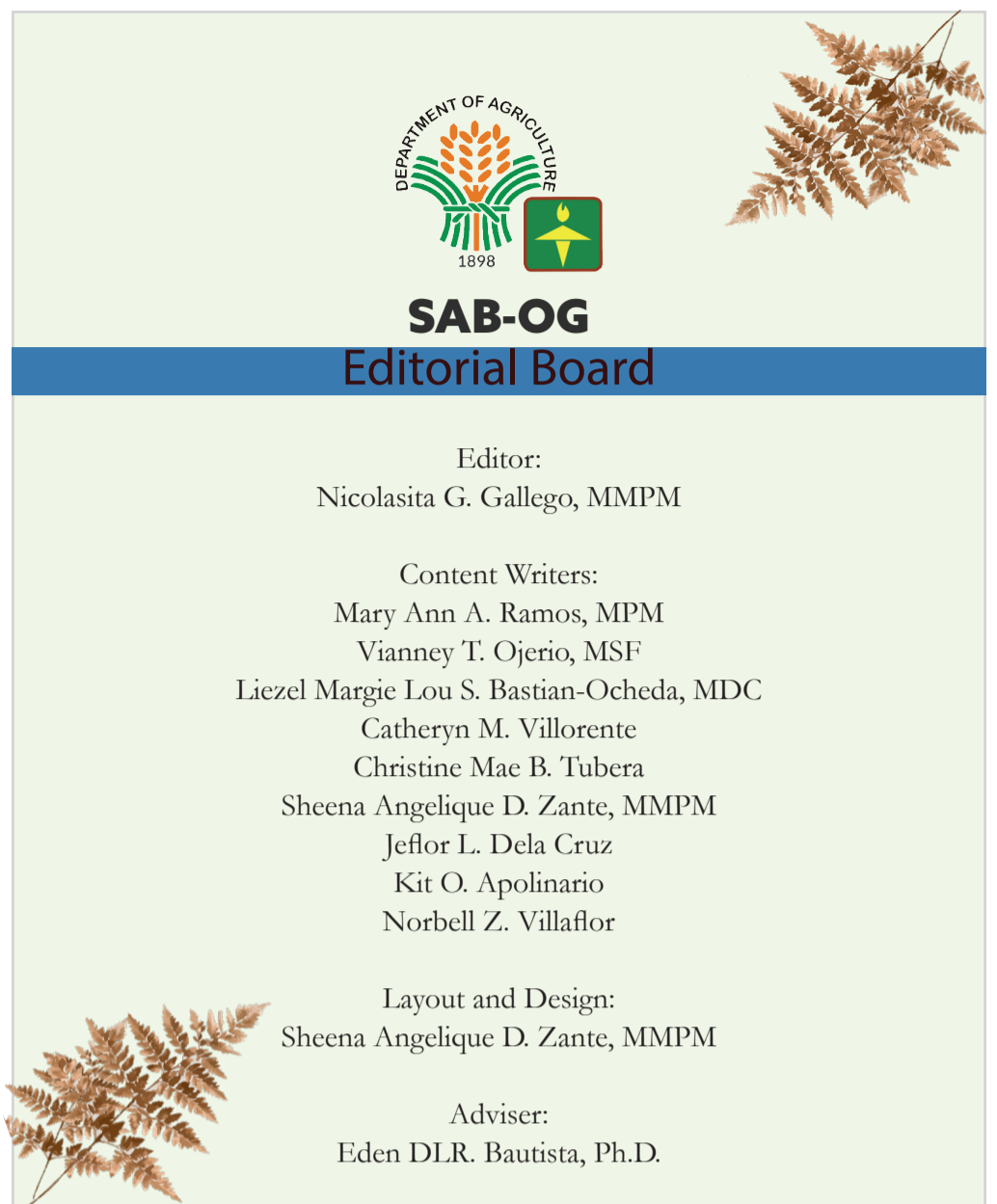
FEATURING:

Going Back to the Basics, *p6*



About the Cover

This issue highlights another series of breakthroughs for ATI Region 6 and its partners in exhibiting utmost commitment in service to the community as represented by Fatima Ebanen, a woman and farmer leader from Igaras, Iloilo. Fatima aims for a sustainable future through agriculture and environmental awareness, a feat that inspires ATI Region 6 to push through boundaries and provide only the best for Western Visayas' agriculture community.



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www.ati.da.gov.ph/ati-6
(036) 267-5951/267-6786
rtc6.dcc@ati.da.gov.ph

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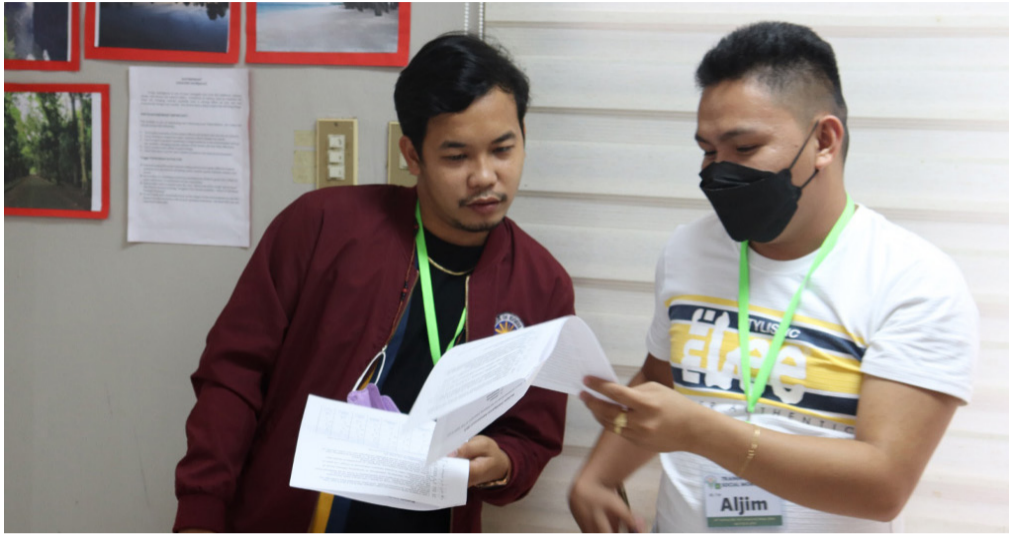
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RBO COORDINATORS GEAR TOWARDS SOCIAL MOBILIZATION

By: Vianney T. Ojerio



The participants actively share their respective dominant intelligence in the Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Test during the Workshop on Appreciating Diversity.

BANGA, Aklan- Twenty-two Rural-based Organizations (RBO) Coordinators gear towards social mobilization as they attend the Training Course on Social Mobilization (TCSM) on April 18-20, 2022, at ATI Training Hall, ASU Compound.

“This training is important for us, Extensionists, so that we can extend our services to whatever our community needs. I strongly believe in what Ma’am Mary Ann said about the ripple effect; that even a simple action we can make in our community will have a huge impact on people’s development,” said Aleia T. Aleja, Agricultural Technologist from the Municipality of Jordan, Guimaras.

After the three-day training and workshops, the participants explored and discovered themselves by recognizing their strengths and weaknesses as Agricultural Technologists. They articulated the meanings of development and change and associated these concepts with stakeholders’ engagement which is vital to their functions as extensionists. Moreover, they analyzed various case studies that

led to creating their advocacies to strengthen engagement and partnership in communities towards sustainable rural development. Furthermore, they explored steps in building partnerships and examined habits that effective community social mobilizers should have.

Mary Ann A. Ramos, Assistant Center Director, as the sole Resource Person of the course discussed the topics namely: achieving personal mastery, appreciating diversity, mobilizing, and sustaining social change, valuing, and strengthening stakeholders’ engagement, winning and gaining support, why working together works, and creating habits of success. Structured learning exercises and a day-to-day learning evaluation process were incorporated to make the training more engaging. The participants went through simple personality tests, brain orientation, multiple intelligences, and case analyses. As agreed, participants submitted their plan of activities in implementing the learning gained from the course which will be monitored and evaluated by the training management team.

Dr. Eden DLR. Bautista, Center Director, in her inspirational message emphasized the importance of the training course as these RBO Coordinators will have a crucial role in the implementation of the Executive Order 138 (Full Devolution of Certain Functions of the Executive Branch to the LGUs) and the Province-led Agriculture and Fisheries Extension System (PAFES) in organizing and mobilizing communities so that they will actively participate in the development process and contribute greatly in the delivery of extension services, particularly in the agriculture and fisheries sectors.

With this, RBO Coordinators in Region 6 are now fully geared as they were prepared to organize and mobilize their rural-based organizations. With the knowledge and skills that they have gained, they are now ready to face the challenges of social mobilization.

NEW RCEF TRAINERS NOW READY TO TAKE ON THE CHALLENGE

By: Jeflor L. Dela Cruz

TIGBAUAN, Iloilo- To complement the goals of the Rice Extension Services Program (RESP), ATI Region 6 produced thirty (30) new trainers under the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund Program through the Training of Trainers on the Production of High-quality Inbred Rice and Seeds, and Farm Mechanization.

The majority of the participants are Agricultural Extension Workers from different municipalities and trainers from ATI Learning Sites and Farm School in the province of Iloilo. This is the training’s second batch for 2022.

A series of social and technical topics were discussed by experts from ATI and partner agencies during the first 10 days of the activity. These include Transformational Leadership, Basics of Financial Literacy, Facilitation, Presentation, and Communication Skills, Training Management, Palay Check System and its Key Checks, Machinery Operation and Safety, Financial Analysis, Agro-Ecosystem Analysis (AESA), Minus One Element Technique (MOET), Double-mulching Technique (DMT), and Policies and Guidelines on Seed Certification. The remaining days were devoted to microteaching and field activities.

“We are grateful and thankful to ATI and the staff for this opportunity. Before I entered the training, I committed to empty myself so I would be on the same page with my fellow participants and have room for further knowledge, and I’m glad I did. I am thankful to have new learnings, shared with my fellow participants, and this will allow us to be equipped as future resource persons. I am from the academe and I’m teaching agriculture courses to younger generations. So I am now even more inspired to teach them and encourage them to continue farming. It is now a challenge for us, to be able to educate and uphold

agriculture to the youth, so thank you very much everyone and God bless. I hope that this investment in us as trainers will not result in failure”, shares participant Homer Deloso during the closing program.

This training aims to create a pool of trainers with enhanced knowledge, skills, and attitude on the implementation of the Modified Season-Long Farmer Field School on the Production of High-Quality Inbred Rice and Seeds. It was conducted last May 16-27, 2022, at Sol y Mar Family Beach Resort, Brgy. Namocon, Tigbauan, Iloilo.

The same activity will be conducted in July, August, and September 2022 in the provinces of Antique and Capiz, respectively.



The participants performing the return demonstration on Minus-One Element Technique as part of their practical/hands-on activities.

AKLAN BAGS THE TOP IN THE ATI REGION 6's THREE-MINUTE SPEECH CONTEST

By: Liezel Margie Lou S. Bastian-Ocheda



ENDED WITH SUCCESS. Participants and judges together with the ATI Region 6 staff posed virtually to conclude the three-minute speech contest.

BANGA, Aklan – Christine Hope S. Pagsugiron of Malay, Aklan clinches the top 1 in the recently concluded ATI Region 6's Three-minute Speech Contest, which is part of the 2nd National Youth in Agriculture Summit, on April 6, 2022, via ZOOM platform.

She was then followed by Tiffany Somes from Lapuz, Iloilo, while Robin Vincent David from San Jose, Antique took the third spot. Moreover, Naomi Basay from Jaro, Iloilo, and Gerard Jeff H. Lauron from Lambunao, Iloilo also joined the said event.

They were given one question to answer with a limited time to organize their thoughts. After the allotted time, they presented their answers in the form of a speech only for three minutes.

Vianney T. Ojerio, ATI Region 6's Development Management Officer II served as the chairman of the board of judges, together with him are as follows: Liezel Margie Lou S. Bastian-Ocheda, Media Production Specialist II, and Sheena Angelique D. Zante, Media Production Specialist I of ATI Region 6 as members.

Pagsugiron will represent the Region in the upcoming 2nd National Youth in Agriculture Summit this April 19, 2022, with the theme "Spark, Encourage, Engage the Youth to Develop (SEED) new leaders for Agriculture."

**with words by Jhonmark Francisco and Cathyrine Belarmino*

OA PROGRAM RETURNS ON-AIR WITH SOA ON WASTE MANAGEMENT

By: Sheena Angelique D. Zante



Flor Mortalla, Program Anchor together with RMN Station Manager DT Joy Gener, welcome learners, and listeners during the launching broadcast of SOA on Waste Management.

KALIBO, Aklan – ATI Region 6's Organic Agriculture program launches this year's School-on-the-Air (SOA) via live broadcast in RMN DYKR Kalibo last April 9, 2022, with a focus on Waste Management and Organic Fertilizer Production through Vermicomposting and Standards. Flor Mortalla, Information Officer II/OA Focal

Person, anchors the program.

Dr. Eden DLR Bautista, Center Director, said that this SOA aims to provide organic and economic solutions to farmers who are facing the persisting high cost of commercial fertilizers in the country. Learners are required to establish their own vermicomposting bed/area that would serve as their training ground during organic fertilizer production activities.

Courses to be discussed on-air include Introduction to Organic Fertilizer, Pre-Requisites in Organic Fertilizer Production, Production of Organic Fertilizer, Harvesting and Proper Application of Organic Fertilizers.

The program targets 500 farmers and Rural-Based Organizations in the province of Aklan.

The SOA on Waste Management will run for four months and will air every Sunday from 12:00 to 1:00 in the afternoon at RMN DYKR Kalibo 1161.

CAPIZNON RICE FARMERS ARE TOWARDS A MORE PRODUCTIVE AND PROFITABLE FARMING THROUGH RCM

By: Christine Mae B. Tubera



A farmer-participant receives printed Rice Crop Manager (RCM) recommendation for managing their rice fields matching their location-specific rice-growing conditions.

SAPIAN, Capiz – "I learned a lot, especially on how we can save in using fertilizers, and it is not supposed to mix with other fertilizers. Now, we learned the right source of fertilizer to be applied, we can lessen our expenses, especially now that we have higher expenses than our yield and income. With this training, we have now the guide on the right way of applying fertilizer, the right timing, the right source, and the right amount of fertilizer to be used. We hope that through this we can have a higher yield in the next cropping season," expressed Ederlita O. Alayon, one of the 27 rice farmers from Brgy. Maninang with below 4 tons' production, participated in the Rice Crop Manager (RCM) Briefing and Orientation on April 6, 2022, in the said municipality.

They were provided lectures on RCM for managing their rice fields. They were also have been registered using Farmer and Farm Lot Registration and generated a total of 31 unique RCM recommendations on nutrient, pest, weed, or water management, depending on the farmer's specific variety used, and his yield from the previous season, and the site-specific conditions of the field.

This activity aims to equip rice farmers with the knowledge and skills on the efficient use of RCM. 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.

FIRST COMMODITY-BASED TRAINING WITH CPD POINTS HELD

By: Norbell Z. Villaflor



Charmae F. Antipatia, Agriculturist II of DA-RFO 6/Resource Person, differentiates the color of the cassava in every variety through its flesh and stem.

BANGA, Aklan – First commodity-based training of ATI Region 6 that earned Continuing Professional Development (CPD) points from the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) was successfully held at Aklan State University Conference Hall last April 5-7, 2022 with 21 participants composed of Agricultural Extension Workers (AEWs) and Learning Site Cooperators from the provinces of Aklan, Antique, and Capiz.

Tiffany C. Gabayoyo, Agriculturist I of DA-RFO-VI, delivered the topic on the overview of the status cassava program in Region VI while Mark Ian G. Ciocon, Science Research Specialist II of the same office, discussed the topic of Integrated Pest Management for Cassava Production.

Other Resource persons include Jay Mart P. Martinez, Science Research Specialist I, and Charmae F. Antipatia, Agriculturist II/former Cassava Focal Person from the same office, tackled the topics on the following: cassava plant and variety identification, nursery establishment and management, cultural management practices in cassava production: varietal/seed selection and preparation, land preparation and crop establishment, introduction to soil management, fertilizer application and management, harvesting and harvest management, cost and return analysis, field immersion to cassava farm and processing of field immersion activity/open forum, submission of action plans. On the last day of the training, they demonstrated the harvest and post-harvest technology for cassava production and the identification of different varieties, pests, and diseases, differentiation of infested diseases during actual cooked and cassava fresh flesh. The two varieties presented on-field immersion was collected to become a sample for the identification of Botanical Description.

This training aims to capacitate the participants with knowledge and skills in cassava production technologies, utilization, and services.

EMPOWERING SEED GROWERS: THE ECONOMY'S REAL FRONTLINERS

By: Jeflor L. Dela Cruz



Allan A. Mijares, Agriculturist I of BPI-NSQCS, performs the germination test during the participants' visit to Seed Laboratory.

MANDURRIA, Iloilo City – “If we look into the picture of all the farmers that are contributing in terms of food sufficiency, we are part of it. We are being prepared through this training because the country needs a good quality of seed and production. We are helping the national vision of the Department of Agriculture. Thank you so much for this opportunity,” said Warlito G. Bagsit, Farmer-Seed Grower from Calaigang, San Rafael, Iloilo, one of the 29 completers of the five-day Training Course on Seed Production and Certification for Inbred Rice Seed Growers on April 4-8, 2022 at Westown Hotel.

The participants have undergone the following topics: Status Implementation of Rice Program in the Region; Procurement

Buffer Stocking; RA #11203 – Rice Tariffication Law; Integrated Nutrient Management/Cultural Management Practices; Mechanics, Policies, and Guidelines on Seed Testing and Certification for Rice; Integrated Pest Management; Seed Testing Procedures and Standards; Varietal Selection and Characteristics of the Approved NSIC Varieties; Harvest and Post-Harvest Technology; Seed Health; Role of Seed Grower and Seed Inspector; and Field Inspection and Roguing.

Technical experts from DA-RFO6 and Bureau of Plant Industry-National Seed Quality Control Services (BPI-NSQCS) Region 6 have augmented the success of the activity. Highlights of the activity include the Field and Laboratory Practicum wherein the participants were given the chance to observe the actual scenario in the field. They were required to perform the roguing and field inspection.

Meanwhile, Dr. Eden DLR. Bautista, ATI Region 6's Center Director, challenged the participants during the closing program to take advantage of the learnings they have acquired in the training, to become the newly accredited seed growers in their respective municipalities, and to plant and produce high-quality seeds to address the gap in seed production in the region and even in the country as a whole.

This activity aims to enable and develop prospective farmers to become accredited seed growers in the province and in partnership with the BPI-NSQCS Region 6 headed by Center Chief III Sixto C. Cabila.

FARMER-YOUTH PARTNERSHIP STRENGTHENS TOWARDS BOOSTED DIGITAL FARMING JOURNEY

By: Liezel Margie Lou S. Bastian-Ocheda



Farmer and youth participants in Jordan, Guimaras try the QR code scanning as part of the hands-on activity.

WESTERN Visayas – Two batches of Digital Farmers Program (DFP) 102, the intermediate level of such program, composed of 20 digital farmers and 20 corresponding youth partners in the Region were organized on April 7-8, 2022 in Sapián, Capiz, and April 20-21, 2022 in Jordan, Guimaras.

As the fifth and sixth batches of DFP 102 Training since its commencement last year, the participants experienced a scaled-up digital farming journey through the utilization of mobile phones while accessing various mobile applications that include agricultural applications, social media platforms, e-commerce, and mobile money. Through their partnership, they were able to create and scan QR codes, access advanced agricultural applications, formulate and present social media content and marketing plan, acquire information and requirements in applying for e-commerce platforms such as eKadiwa, Lazada, and Shoppe, and lastly, download and register to PayMaya, a type of mobile money.

They also got the opportunity to showcase their learning in social media content creation and social media marketing plan by actively joining in the Online Poster Contest and Social Media Marketing Plan Formulation and Presentation. These activities will serve as their training ground and apply to their corresponding Facebook Pages.

In the first batch, the three pairs that reigned as the outstanding Social Media Marketing Planners are as follows: Sharon Irojo & Jhon Anthony Theodore; Raphael Leonor & Gabriel Leonor; and Angelita Omayao & Tia May Olivar while Marilou Olanga & Jhomers Esteves led the Online Poster Contest. On the other hand, the second batch recognized the following pairs as the best Social Media Marketing Planners: Minviluz S. Camina & Rene Aron Christoffer S. Olympia; Renalene C. Trompeta & Janella Marie C. Trompeta; and Maria Digna L. Banabatac & Kc Lyn F. Galon. As of writing, the Online Poster Contest for this batch is still running and will end on April 29, 2022. Each pair received mobile phones, home prepaid wifi, and load cards up to Php500.

DFP is a ladderized program of ATI and Smart Communications, Inc. and consists of three-level programs DFP 101 (Beginner), DFP 102 (Intermediate), and DFP 103 (Advance) to help farmers make better farming decisions, access more market opportunities, and increase their livelihood and income through the internet and mobile technology.

GOING BACK TO THE BASICS: THE FA

By: Sheena Ang



Fatima established and operates Novavita Integrated Farm with the help of her family and neighborhood. She dreams of a sustainable future for the farm.

Care is one of the most basic needs anyone or anything can receive. For farmer Fatima Ebanen, the value of caring is a foundation that she frequently goes back to, giving her organic farm sound purpose.

CHOSEN PATH

Fatima Ebanen of Brgy. 6 Poblacion, Igaras, Iloilo is a registered nurse by profession. She has served both public and civil society care facilities within the first five years of her practice. She considered herself blessed to have experienced success in the early years of her career. Her siblings, however, thought otherwise when she gave it all up and went back to Igaras to seek a bigger purpose.

“My siblings thought I lost my mind when I gave up my stable job at the Armed Forces of the Philippines Medical Center,” Fatima amusingly recalled. “I was tired, and I was not contented.” She then proceeded to become a staff nurse in a children’s foundation in Manila and a Medical Representative for a private pharmaceutical company in Western Visayas.

When she decided to settle down with her husband and had a family, she took a job as a Public Health Associate under the Department of Health to be close to home. This opportunity assigned her to the local nutrition program. Here she saw the state of malnourished children in her community, prompting her to pursue something within her power that can help the children and her whole community: farming.

FINDING TRUE CALLING

After Fatima left her job in the health center, she still ventured into small-scale businesses of her own, allowing her network to grow within the community. It was during 2019 when the pandemic hit that she was able to address the needs of some farmers who were not able to sell their crops due to the rising cases of COVID.

“I told some farmers to bring their crops in our old

house, we would take photos of it, and post them online. I would facilitate the orders for them and deliver them. In just three months, we earned about fifty thousand pesos and I was deeply motivated because not only did we help our local farmers, we also generated income from agricultural products,” tells Fatima.

The time came that COVID-19 restrictions were eased and she was able to participate in ATI Region 6’s Training of Trainers on the Production of High-Quality Inbred Rice and Seeds, and Farm Mechanization. This training convinced Fatima and her husband to fully invest in farming. She utilized their pandemic earnings for the operations of the three-hectare farmland that they purchased. She also earned her National Certificate II in Organic Agriculture under a TESDA Farm School.

During the farm and learning site development process, Fatima would often ask for guidance and help from the Lord. Seeking validation if what she is pursuing is worth all the hard work, she would pray regularly.

BREATHING NEW LIFE

Along the way, she realized that her hometown does not have a Learning Site. Her realization breathes new life to her personal goals and aspirations for her community, hence the establishment of Novavita Integrated Farm. “Novavita came from the Latin Phrase ‘Nova Vitae’, which means new life. This is my new life, my new purpose. I should not be the only one who is learning, I must share this with the community,” Fatima explained.



“At first, I had to plant my crops. I wanted to show the farmers what we can do, because for them, to see is to believe. I grew eggplants, sweet corn, watermelon, and squash without using chemicals,” Fatima continued. Her efforts would pay off, for the Farmers Association of Barangay 6 (FAOB 6) asked for her instruction and they would have training sessions on vermicomposting. Fatima encouraged every member to have a vermicomposting facility and up until today, their crops are thriving because of their respective efforts. STAYING ORGANICA group of sixty-three, FAOB 6 under the leadership of Fatima, now runs a program with a massive vermicomposting facility and production of concoctions. Fatima emphasized that she especially encourages the women in their organization to focus on the production of organic concoctions as part of their livelihood. The men would follow suit, learning from the sessions of the women of FAOB 6. The teamwork within their association motivated Fatima to carry on with her organic efforts, and she applies their products on her farm.

Like any other farm, Fatima’s organic practice in Nova Vita has met major challenges. These include pests that would consume their shares in their produce. Fatima, however, observed that this situation was not as damaging as they thought it would be,



Novavita Integrated Farm markets FAOB 6’s organic concoctions in support of the association.

as long as you are diligent and meticulous enough to manage pests. “After all, pests can’t even finish off one fruit. If there is just enough yield, you won’t lose,” justifies Fatima. Novavita has produced thirteen crops of fruit and vegetable varieties since January. In her organic practice, she recorded that there is low input cost and high profit. She emphasized that maximizing natural resources that are readily available is a perspective worth practicing. Furthermore, the real investment goes into the painstaking process of production, monitoring, and of course, time. Every two months, her farm earns an income of almost Php30,000 pesos. She used these facts to motivate her fellow FAOB 6 members who were hesitant to practice organic at first. “Organic practice is indeed difficult if you are doing it alone. However, if you have a support system and people whom you can produce together with, it is much easier and rewarding,” Fatima testifies.

ADVOCATING HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Fatima would attribute her farm organic practice to

FATIMA EIBANEN SUCCESS STORY

Delique D. Zante

healthcare and nutrition. She knows that consuming organic products is very beneficial and she applied this to the daily lives of her family and farm staff. “My older daughter used to get sick a lot. When we moved to our farmhouse and started to incorporate our products into our daily meals, she became healthier.” Fatima also adopts community members who succumbed to alcohol and cigarettes and employs them as farm workers. Fatima cares for them by managing their health and providing interventions for their nu-



Fatima regularly monitors her crops for signs of pests and developing diseases.

trition. “It is rewarding to see them healthier and happy and earning their income,” according to Fatima. She also took young farmers under her wing, training them to be productive agripreneurs. “Novavita’s advocacy is really to share and to influence, and of course practice organic farming. I am blessed to be able to apply our advocacy in our everyday life.”

FURTHER PURPOSE

Novavita plans to step forward and contribute to waste management through their “Basura Bay-lo Laswa Program (Trash in exchange for vegetables)” as a strategy. She already had a trial run of this activity, wherein people exchange pounds of their garbage for fresh produce. Fatima deemed this very productive, because people are, once again, going back to the basics and making use of what is already available. “We never run out of waste and garbage. If we could teach people to maximize what is already there and make them realize what they can earn out of these resources, our communities would survive and thrive,” dreams Fatima.



Bananas are available in the farm’s dining area for all the farm workers. Fatima encourages her farmers to consume the fruit in order to manage their urge to consume a stick of cigarette.

A SOLID FOUNDATION

From the ground up, Fatima dreams to ascend with her fellow farmers. The following and support that she gained from her fellow farmers are what she considers her biggest achievement and legacy so far.

Fatima concluded that the very core of why she ventured into organic farming is for a steady and healthy food supply for the children. “I challenge all our farmers to look back to their children and imagine them in five years. Yes, they will become lawyers and engineers and professionals, but what will sustain them if we will not pursue organic agriculture? Will they live off processed food? Will they have ample life span if what they consume is unhealthy?”

Fatima promised to go back to the basics, to nature and the ground, to build the foundation for a better and healthier future for her community.

“
Organic practice is indeed difficult if you are doing it alone. However, if you have a support system and people whom you can produce together with, it is much easier and rewarding.”



Novavita’s vermicomposting facility became an income-generating opportunity for the Ebanen family.



As a mother, Fatima considers her daughters as her greatest inspiration and motivation to push forward the organic way of living.

WESTERN VISAYAS PRODUCES NEW SET OF RICE SEED INSPECTORS

By: Jeflor L. Dela Cruz



Participants perform field inspections including strip sampling, recording the presence of objectionable weeds, and rouging.

TIGBAUAN, Iloilo- To address the problems of shortage of good quality rice seeds, and the low number of accredited seed growers and seed inspectors, ATI region 6 recently conducted the 5-day Training Course on Inbred Rice Seed Production and Certification for Deputized and Designated Seed Inspectors.

A total of 30 participants were composed of agricultural extension workers from the provinces of Antique, Capiz, Guimaras, Iloilo, and Negros Occidental, and staff from the Bureau of Plant Industry -National Seed Quality Control Services (BPI-NSQGS) have completed the training.

During the training, lectures and presentations on the national rice program, cultural management practices of inbred rice, and harvest and post-harvest technology were discussed. Also, topics on seed production, certification, and the role of seed inspectors were presented.

Additionally, seed bagging and tagging, sampling, and routing of samples in the laboratory were undertaken during the training.

Highlights of the activity also include field inspection, strip sampling, rouging, and seed testing procedures.

Joie B. Guimaray, Agriculturist II of DA-RFO 6, Sixto C. Cabila, chief of NSQCS R6, Jenelyn A. Amorsolo, Agriculturist II and Assistant Chief of BPI NSQCS Region 6, Fennie Lyn Pantin, RCEF regional coordinator for Panay, PhilRice-Negros Occidental, Florida D. Demamay, Science Research Specialist II of DA-RFO 6, and Queenie R. Carbaquel, Agriculturist I of BPI NSQCS R6 are the pool of experts who shared their expertise and contributed to the success of the activity.

Moreover, participants expressed their appreciation for the learnings that they have gained during the training. Participant Roberto Arconada of LGU Cabatuan said: "When I heard about the training for seed inspectors, I immediately submitted an intent to attend the said training. I also want to help our seed growers and farmers by becoming a seed inspector, since there is only one in our area. I am thankful for all the learnings and I hope that I and my fellow participants can apply this

in our respective localities."

Meanwhile, in her inspirational message, Eden DLR. Bautista, ATI Region 6 center director emphasized to the participants the importance of the application of the learnings and skills that they have gained during the training. "Sometimes, when we fail to execute learnings and hone our skills, we become rustic and dull. May this training give you not only knowledge but also a positive attitude. Your attitude will then direct you to become efficient and effective seed inspectors," Bautista stressed.

This training that was held last June 6-10, 2022 at Sol y Mar Family Beach Resort, Tigbauan, Iloilo aims to improve the seed inspectors' capabilities to perform their functions in providing technical services to seed growers. Furthermore, this activity has provided 12 CPD points for the licensed agriculturists who have finished the whole duration of the training.

ATI REGION 6 HARNESSSES FARM OWNERS AND COOPERATORS ON SUSTAINING INDIVIDUAL LEARNING SITES FOR AGRICULTURE

By: Liezel Margie Lou S. Bastian-Ocheda



The group photo that signals the conclusion of the two-day Learning Site for Agriculture (LSA) Forum and Quarterly Meeting.

BANGA, Aklan – Sixty farm owners and cooperators across the Region attend the Learning Site for Agriculture (LSA) Forum and Quarterly Meeting at ATI Training Hall, ASU Compound on April 21-22, 2022.

The two-day activity aims to enhance the LSA's knowledge and attitude on transformational leadership and sustaining partnership, documenting their activities including their corresponding obligations and responsibilities, widen opportunities in accessing relevant services to possibly level up to farm school and farm tourism sites.

On the first day, Lyn G. Bantigue, ATI Region 6's Agriculturist II/Project Officer, discussed the obligations of LSA cooperators while Vianney T. Ojerio, ATI Region 6's Development Management Officer II, tackled the presentation of the LSA report and other forms including some workshops and report writing.

On the second day of the event, Jireh Grace Bastistin, Faculty Staff of ASU Ibaday, conveyed to the participants the basics of farm tour guiding for their individual learning sites. The farm owners and cooperators also shared their best practices in their learning sites, helping each other to adopt and gain valuable experiences.

*with words by Jhonmark Francisco

ATI REGION 6 EMPOWERS ITS "EXTENSION PARTNERS" THROUGH TGP PLANNING WORKSHOP

By: Catheryn M. Villorente



Participants from the third batch of the TGP planning workshop take an online course in e-Learning using their smartphones and laptops.

WESTERN, Visayas – "Being able to participate in this planning workshop is a great help in the development of our Farmers' Information and Technology Services (FITS) Center. I have learned to access the e-Learning which I can also share with our on-the-job trainees, farmers, fisherfolks, and students in our municipality. With our workshop on IEC development, I can now create more IEC materials for our FITS center," shared Ma. Eda Antonette Unlayao, FITS Staff of Libertad, Antique, was one of the 94 participants that attended the series of Techno Gabay Program (TGP) Provincial Planning Workshops conducted from March to April 2022 in the various provinces in the Region. Ms. Unlayao joined the third batch of the said planning workshop in Tigbauan, Iloilo.

They were gathered and oriented on the TGP and e-Extension programs of ATI. The activities enabled them to understand their significant roles in the delivery of agriculture-related information and technologies to the farmers, fishers, and other stakeholders.

Likewise, they performed hands-on activities on e-Learning, one of the components of the e-Extension program, which they were able to sign-up and enroll in an online course in agriculture and fisheries.

Additionally, they were provided with the basic knowledge and skills in the development of information, education, and communication (IEC) materials. As part of their outputs, they were able to develop their IEC materials, which can be disseminated to the clients of their respective FITS centers.

The four batches of the TGP provincial planning workshop were held on March 29-30, 2022 in Banga, Aklan for FITS staff of Aklan and Capiz; on March 31-April 1 in Mandurriao, Iloilo participated by FITS staff of Iloilo Districts 3 to 5 and Guimaras; on April 25-26 in Tigbauan, Iloilo for FITS staff of Iloilo Districts 1 to 2 and Antique; and on April 28-29 in Bacolod City participated by FITS staff of Negros Occidental.

This activity aims to capacitate FITS Center staff as extension partners of the Institute in carrying out the TGP.

DIGITAL AGRICULTURE COURSE UPGRADES ILONGGO AND NEGRENSE RCEF TRAINERS

By: Sheena Angelique D. Zante



Participating trainer Johndy Diosana of Amalgamate Farm Management Services facilitated the discussion on Social Media Marketing during the microteaching session.

MANDURRIAIO, Iloilo City — A fresh batch of RCEF trainers boosted their knowledge and skills on Digital Agriculture through the Training of Trainers (TOT) on Digital Agriculture Course (DAC) for RCEF conducted last June 15-17, 2022 at Mo2 Westown Hotel, Mandurriao, Iloilo City. Twenty (20) participants attended the said training.

The TOT on DAC for RCEF is comprised of two modules, DAC 101 and 102, and several activities and exercises that will aid the trainers in planning and facilitating the conduct of the Digital Agriculture Course in their respective farm schools.

Participating farm schools from across Iloilo and Negros Occidental immersed themselves in different digital technologies, advanced agriculture applications and social media marketing practices in order to echo the same lessons to future farmer students.

The trainers were equipped on the topics, Smartphone 101, Accessing the Internet and Internet Basic Safety Tips, Basic and Advanced Agriculture ICT Tools, Basic and Advanced Social Media Marketing, Agriculture Apps on Rice, e-Commerce Platforms and Mobile Money.

Participants were also required to present and submit their Social Media Marketing Plan, Farm School Roll Out Plan and live microteaching sessions in front of panelists.

Outstanding outputs were also recognized through the awarding of prizes for Best Social Media Marketing Planners, Best Social Media Content and Best Presenters.

The participants are set to receive their certificate of completion upon the evaluation of their final requirement, the recorded microteaching sessions.

ANTIQUÉ BBOs SKILLED UP THROUGH SPECIMEN COLLECTION TRAINING

By: Kit O. Apolinario



Barangay Biosecurity Security Officers continue to enhance their knowledge and skills as they contribute to the prevention of ASF in Antique and Western Visayas.

ANTIQUÉ, Western Visayas — ATI Region 6 conducted two batches of Bantay ASF (African Swine Fever) sa Barangay: Training on Specimen Collection for Barangay Biosecurity Officers (BBOs) in the Province of Antique. The activity aims to enhance the participants' knowledge and skills as biosecurity officers in line with the ASF prevention program.

Thirty-nine (39) Barangay Biosecurity Officers from North and South Antique participated in the lectures and discussions about ASF prevention and control, specimen collection, handling, packaging, and transportation of specimens to the regional laboratory. Salient topics include the provincial ordinance on prevention and control of ASF, movement and repopulation of swine, and the roles and responsibilities of veterinary biosecurity officers and BBOs.

In addition, participants also performed hands-on activities on blood sample collection, swine-retraining, and vein spotting at the Sibalom and Culasi slaughterhouses.

Personnel from the Department of Agriculture — Regional Field Office 6 Regional Animal Disease Diagnostics Laboratory and Office of the Provincial Veterinarian served as resource speakers during the training.

Moreover, BBO kits to be used for disease monitoring and surveillance of ASF were distributed to the participants during the closing ceremony.

The back-to-back training was steered in coordination and collaboration with the Antique provincial local government unit.

These activities were held at Parvana Inn in Sibalom and Anna Sophie Hostel in Culasi last June 6-7 and 8-9, 2022.

RCMAS V.4.0 INTRODUCED IN ILOILO

By: Sheena Angelique D. Zante



Participant Leonidas Tan snaps an ID photo of a farmer for the Farmer and Farm Lot Registration.

MANDURRIAIO, Iloilo City — In continuation of the Training of Trainers on the the Rice Crop Manager Advisory Service using the rebuild version (v.4.0), ATI Region 6 conducted a 3-day training last May 17-19, 2022 at the Mo2 Westown Hotel, Mandurriao, Iloilo City. Twenty-eight (28) Agricultural Extension Workers from Iloilo and Guimaras completed the said training.

The AEWs were able to refresh their knowledge and skills on the RCMAS rebuild version (v.4.0) and its complementary tools through topics and activities like operating and navigating the RCM AS rebuild version, registering and verifying their accounts in the RCM User Registration, register farmers' field on location using the GPS device, provide RCM recommendations for the farmers, explain and understand the Farmer and Farm lot Registration, and over-all explain the RCM AS v.4.0 and its complementary tools. A field activity was also conducted in Brgy. Cari Mayor, Leganes, Iloilo were the participants practiced geotagging using hand-held GPS devices.

Tubungan RCM Focal Person Cristin V. Talabon says that although the training was very challenging, she is happy that she was able to register, verify and serve a farmer through RCM and that they were able to apply all that was discussed in their field activities.

Resource Persons during the said training are experts from the Department of Agriculture Region 6 Research Division (WESVIARC).

CROP DIVERSIFICATION PROMOTED IN CAUAYAN, NEGROS OCCIDENTAL

By: Jeflor L. Dela Cruz



Participants perform the establishment of contour lines using A-frame during their practicum.

CAUAYAN, Negros Occidental – “ATI Region 6 conducted a 3-day training on Integrated Rice-Based Farming System for Barangay Camindangan Upland Development Farmers Association (BACUDFA). This training is in response of the Department of Agriculture to the request of the Local Government Unit of Cauayan, Negros Occidental.

Eduardo T. Tresico, trainer and learning site cooperater, discussed several topics on integrated farming systems (IFS). These includes; the palayamanan system, sloping agricultural land technology (SALT), and effective conservation, utilization and recycling of crop residues and livestock wastes in improving soil fertility and crop productivity.

Meanwhile, Rodel R. Leyson, project officer and Training Specialist II, discussed the rice industry situationer in Western Visayas. A practicum where participants were able to establish contour using the A-frame and green manuring are some of the highlights of the activity.

During the closing program, starter kits which included rake, hoe and cane cutter were distributed to the participants.

The 30 completers expressed excitement over establishing their own farm and future practice of IFS. “We are very grateful for the presence and efforts of ATI to reach our area. We are thankful for all the new ideas and learnings. I hope that we will be able to apply and sustain all of this in our association,” shared Mary Ann Lirazan, one of the 30 participants.

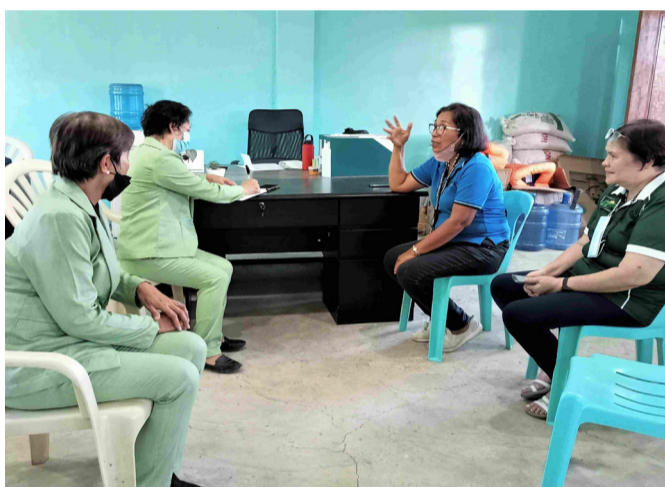
Further, they hoped that the training would be a catalyst of progress for their rural community.

This endeavor is part of the implementation of the 18 key strategies under the One DA Agenda which includes farm diversification. Under the strategy, farmers, particularly those involved in the production of rice, corn, and coconut, are encouraged and supported to diversify into other commodities such as vegetables and other high-value seasonal crops to boost their incomes.

This training was held last June 22-24, 2022 at Brgy. Camindangan, Cauayan, Negros Occidental.

ATI 6 WORKS OUT TO ESTABLISH ADDITIONAL FITS CENTERS IN THE

By: Catheryn M. Villorente



ATI-RTC VI Center Director Eden DLR. Bautista (right) along with Information Services Section Chief Nicolasita Gallego discusses the FITS requirements with the personnel of Calatrava Municipal Agriculture Office.

Western Visayas – As part of its constant efforts to bring agri-fishery information and technologies closer to the communities, the Agricultural Training Institute – Regional Training Center VI continues to establish Farmers Information and Technology Services (FITS) Centers across the region.

The Information Services Section of the Institute spearheaded the inspection and evaluation of the proposed establishment of the additional FITS Centers located in Calinog, Carles, and Leganes in Iloilo City. The team also visited the municipality of Calatrava and Sipalay City in Negros Occidental for the same purpose.

The team visited the proposed FITS centers site to check whether they conform to the specific requirements as stipulated in the Memorandum of Agreement for the FITS establishment.

Among the requirements assessed during the inspection were the accessibility to clients, space requirement, furniture and fixtures, availability of office space and ICT equipment and the availability of staff who will run the FITS center.

Once approved, these proposed FITS centers will be in addition to the 59 existing and operational FITS Centers in the region that provides information services to farmers, fishers and stakeholders in agriculture and fisheries.

The local agriculture’s office visited during the evaluation shared common thoughts on the importance of establishing a FITS Center in their municipalities.

“The establishment of a FITS Center is greatly needed by our farmers, fisher folks and especially by our 4H young members ” shared Jerica Ameler, Municipal Agriculturist of Calatrava.

Also, Diana Marie Limbang, Municipal Agriculturist of Leganes stated: “FITS center will help us convey up-to-date information to our beloved farmers and fisher folks as well as serve as a center for new technologies.”

The FITS Center is one of the components of the Techno Gabay Program of the Agricultural Training Institute which serves as one of the modalities of the Institute in bringing extension services to the countryside. It is a one-stop service facility established in the community that provides easy access to agri-fishery information and technologies.

The inspection and evaluation of the proposed FITS Centers were conducted last June 13-14, 2022 for municipalities in Iloilo and June 21-23, 2022 in Negros Occidental.

EMPOWERING NEWLY-ELECTED 4H OFFICERS TOWARD TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

By: Kit O. Apolinario



Applying unity and teamwork, Team Caliber builds a plastic cup tower with a unique communication strategy.

JARO, Iloilo – In support of one of the 18 Key Strategies of the Department of Agriculture: Youth and Women Engagement, ATI Region organizes the Training on Leadership Skills and Organizational Management for (RBO) Provincial and Municipal 4H Officers at the EON Centennial Hotel on April 26-28, 2022.

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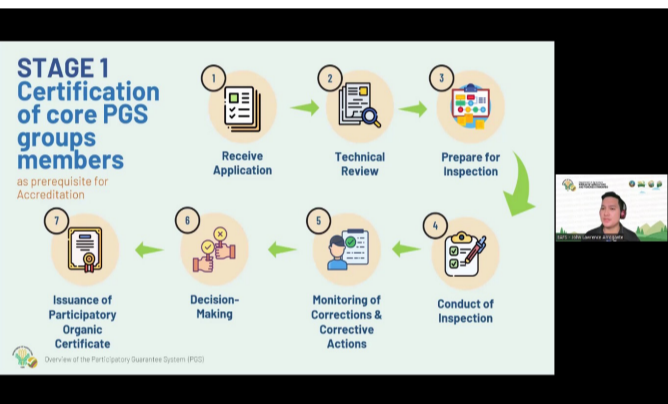
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A total of 25 participants from all the provinces in the region completed the three-day training. They were able to enhance their knowledge, skills, and attitude in leadership and organizational management. The activity also addressed their needs and concerns in managing their clubs through the following topics: Transformational Leadership, Paradigm Shift, Communication Teamwork, Organizational Management, among others. They also experienced a simulation of a meeting through a parliamentary procedure.

Being true to its commitment, the agency continues to uphold its commitment to Strengthening competency and competitiveness through capability building.

WEBINAR ON PGS SHEDS LIGHT ON THE ORGANIC CERTIFICATION PROCESS

By: Sheena Angelique D. Zante



John Lawrence Arrogante, Resource Person, detailing the different stages of the certification process for PGS Core Groups.

BANGA, Aklan - As part of the Skill Up Webinar Series Specials of the Agricultural Training Institute, ATI Region 6 conducted the Webinar, "Don't Panic, It's Certified Organic: A Webinar on Organic Certification" last June 23, 2022, live via Facebook, Youtube, and Zoom. The webinar highlighted the salient points of the Organic Agriculture Act (RA 10068) as amended by the Republic Act of 11511.

Ninety-one (91) online participants participated in the said webinar. These are composed of students, farmers, organic agriculture practitioners and enthusiasts, people from the academe, and the general public.

For the extensive provision of information, and knowledge and to facilitate comprehensive interaction, the Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Standards (BAFS) was invited as Resource Person. Science Research Specialist John Lawrence Arrogante discussed the overview of processes and procedures under RA 11511. He expounded on the Peer-review process under the Participatory Guarantee

Systems (PGS), the accreditation process of the core PGS group conducted by the BAFS, and the benefits of PGS for farmers and farmers' organization.

Arrogante emphasized during his discussion that PGS Core Groups can "serve as a 'support system' in various aspects of farming since PGS is built on the foundation of trust, social network and knowledge exchange".

"I am so happy that we have this program and the explanation the speaker provided was very clear. Becoming a core group of PGS is simple, and affordable and the requirements are easy to comply with. I am practicing organic and natural farming for four years now, and it has been difficult for me to acquire an organic certificate. Thanks to ATI and BAFS, it is now possible," expressed Job Ferolino of Miagaorganiko Agri Tourism Farm.

The PGS, as per the BAFS, is a locally-focused assurance system that aims to certify farmer members as organic practitioners.



TRAINING AND ACTIVITY PHOTOS





Department of Agriculture
 Agricultural Training Institute
 Regional Training Center VI
 ASU Compound, Banga, Aklan



rtc6.dcc@ati.da.gov.ph



(036) 267-5951



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