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About the Cover

Robelyn M. Japsay and her vision not only for her family but for her community to board a bigger boat to load and transport a huge amount of harvest of their products amid flood show selflessness and sense of service. She dreams not only for herself but for the people surrounding her.

ATI in Western Visayas, as an agricultural extension provider, also serves its clients even beyond boundaries. This expresses selflessness to deliver extension services of any form until it reaches its vision, which is food availability and affordability for every Filipino family through excellent extension services in agriculture and fisheries.



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Aklan State University Compound, Banga, Aklan 5601
www.ati.da.gov.ph/ati-6
(036) 267-5951/267-6786
rtc6.dcc@ati.da.gov.ph

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ALL ABOARD: The Robelyn M. Japsay Success Story

DA SECRETARY DAR TURNS OVER ₱5M WORTH PROJECT TO HOG RAISERS FOR SWINE REPOPULATION PROGRAM

By: Mary Ann A. Ramos



The actual turnover of PhP5M worth of cheque from DA Secretary William Dar to Hinigaran Cacao Integrated Farmers Association (HCIFA) President Prudencio B. Pabalinas and some officers.

HINIGARAN, Negros Occidental – Department of Agriculture Secretary William D. Dar turns over Php5-million worth of cheque to the Hinigaran Cacao Integrated Farmers Association (HCIFA) for the swine repopulation program on December 9, 2021.

The fund, which was sourced from the Integrated National Swine Production Initiatives for Recovery and Expansion Program (INSPIRE) of the DA-National Livestock Program, will be used to establish a Community-based Swine Farm in the said municipality. It is envisioned to become a sustainable source of quality hogs that would be available to the local market to help hasten the calibrated repopulation and expansion of production farm clustering and eventual consolidation, regardless of zoning classification.

The HCIFA, as the overall implementing entity, will establish a community-based farm for swine entitled: “Community-Based Swine Production through Clustering and Consolidation Project.” It will have modern facilities with a climate-controlled system and biosecurity as required such as but not limited to purchase of land, equipment, and establishment of a new housing/ repair of existing housing.

The said project will be implemented by the Agricultural Training Institute - Regional Training Center VI headed by Dr. Eden DLR. Bautista, DA-Regional Field Office VI/National Livestock Program headed by RED Remelyn R. Recoter, Local Government Unit of Hinigaran headed by Municipal Mayor Jose Nadie P. Arceo, and Hinigaran Cacao Integrated Farmers Association with the President Prudencio B. Pabalinas in Sitio Balabag, Brgy. Candumarao, Hinigaran, Negros Occidental.

FIRST RCEF CLUSTER MEETING AND CONSULTATION IN THE REGION CONDUCTED

By: John Carlo S. Angeles



TESDA-Aklan representative presents the guidelines and accomplishments relevant to RCEF-FFS.

BANGA, Aklan - “The most important aspect in this consultation is the things that we’ve learned from the experiences and the best practices of our fellow LSA-Farm School Owners. Thank you ATI for bringing us together, to share and learn so that we could go back to our respective farm schools with confidence. Since we are now knowledgeable in the things that we are expecting in our areas. I’ve enjoyed the exchange of ideas, challenges, and difficulties with the possible solutions,” expressed

Ma. Elna T. Romero, owner of Crisel Integrated Farm at Magancina, Sta. Barbara, Iloilo, during the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) Learning Site for Agriculture (LSA) - Farm School Owners Cluster Meeting and Consultation last November 8-9, 2021 at ATI- Training Hall, ASU Compound.

The Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund - Rice Extension Services Program (RCEF-RESP) implemented strategic extension services to farmers to improve their knowledge, attitude, skills, and practices in producing more rice at reduced production cost.

The RCEF-RESP recognized the RCEF-Farm Schools (RCEF-FS) as its partners in building the capabilities of the rice farmers through the conduct of the Farmer Field School on Production of High-Quality Inbred Rice, Seed Certification, and Farm Mechanization.

The participants revisited their roles and functions as implementing agency, and as RCEF LSA - Farm School. The participants also shared their experiences and best practices in conducting a Farmer Field School. Moreover, they identified and presented the issues and concerns on the implementation of RCEF-RESP (pre, during, and post-implementation) thru accomplishing the workshop templates. They also clarified the issues presented to the implementing agencies who are present such as ATI, PhilRice, and TESDA.

After three years of implementation of the program, the ATI-RTC 6 as one of the implementing agencies conducted the said activity, which intends to level off with the RCEF-FS owners’ perceptions on the roles, responsibilities, and contributions in RCEF-RESP implementation.

It was conducted face-to-face with 30 RCEF LSA-FS attendees from the provinces of Aklan, Antique, Capiz, Iloilo, Guimaras, and Negros Occidental. Further, representatives from TESDA-Aklan, TESDA-Capiz, and PhilRice Negros Occidental were also present.

ANTIQUENO FARMERS SOAR FOR SOA ON RCEF

By: Sheena Angelique D. Zante



Farmer graduates from Tobias Fornier perform yells as they got acknowledged during the graduation’s Opening Ceremony.

SAN JOSE, Antique – Over 400 farmers concluded their journey on the School-on-the-Air on Integrated Nutrient Management System under the RCEF program last November 25-26, 2021 through the Provincial Ceremonial Mass Graduation conducted in Hotel Kinaray-a.

The three-month-long training covered modules on understanding RCEF and implications to rice farmers, Integrated Nutrient Management concepts, definitions and advantages, Essential Elements of Soil, Land Form and Classification, Forms and Functions of Fertilizer, Soil Deficiency Identification Syndrome and Analysis, and Tools to assess nutrient deficiencies, symptoms, and management.

Farmer participants hailed from the Municipalities of Anini-y, Barbaza, Belison, Bugasong, Culasi, Hamtic, Laua-an, Pandan, Patnongon, San Remegio, Sibalom, and Tobias Fornier. The local government units of the respective municipalities, through the Offices of the Municipal Agriculturist, ensured the effective implementation of the SOA on INM under RCEF through close coordination with the enrollees.

Present during the Graduation Ceremony were honored guests from the Provincial Government of Antique, including Vice Governor Edgar D. Denosta, Sangguniang Panlalawigan Members Fernando C. Corvera, Sr., Noel C. Alamis, Mayella Mae P. Ladislao, and Alfie Jay O. Niquia. San Jose de Buenavista Mayor Elmer C. Untaran also graced the first day of the event.

Highlighting the ceremony is the attendance of former Department of Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol, who empowered the rice farmers on their productivity and significant role in the local economy.

Felipe Fulgencio, farmer-participant from San Remegio professed, “Thank you kay nangin farmer ako. Kag dahil farmer ako, busog ang akon pamilya. Kag bahol nga bagay ang School-on-the-Air on Nutrient Management, kay nag insakto akon pag-gamit ka abuno kag iban pa nga technology sa akon pag-panguma. [I am thankful that I am a

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FIRST SPIN-OFF ACTIVITY ON COMMUNICATING AGRICULTURAL BIOTECHNOLOGY CONDUCTED IN REGION VI

By: John Carlo S. Angeles



Participants presented their outputs on IEC development to panelists from ATI Region 6 Information Services Section.

WESTERN Visayas – “It has been a productive activity. Thank you so much, Training Management Team, for facilitating this kind of activity. You imparted to us additional learnings regarding the modern trends in biotechnology. Our expert Resource Persons delivered their assigned topics very well and made them easier for us to understand. They do not just speak according to the books; they also share their personal experiences. Surely, we will re-echo and share the knowledge we have learned with our colleagues and clients,” expressed Nikko L. Mambusada, Agricultural Technologist from Office of the Provincial Agriculturist – Iloilo, after attending the three-day training on Strengthening the Capability of Agricultural Extension System on Communicating Biotechnology last September 28-30, 2021 via Zoom. Twenty-one (21) participants attended the virtual training.

The participants took part in lectures on the Introduction to Agricultural Biotechnology; Classical Biotechnology and its application to Agriculture; Modern Agricultural Biotechnology: Issues, Concerns, and its Regulations; Agricultural Productivity through Biotechnology; Climate Change, Modern Biotechnology, and Organic Agriculture; and Communicating Agricultural Biotechnology. Moreover, a workshop was administered on developing Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials. The resource persons of this online activity came from the Biotechnology Coalition of the Philippines and the ATI-RTC 6 - Information Services Section.

As part of the course requirements, the participants developed their IEC materials, presented them to the session, and were critiqued by panelists. Each participant submitted the revised IEC materials and Action Plans.

Generally, this activity aims to enhance the knowledge, skills, and attitude of participants on identifying beneficial Agricultural Biotechnology and the role of Modern Biotechnology in addressing impacts of Climate Change and in issues on agricultural productivity.

The participants came from the different Municipal and Provincial Local Government Units, National Government Agencies, State Universities, and private institutions in the region.

ILONGGO SEED GROWERS RETOOLED ON INBRED RICE PRODUCTION AND CERTIFICATION

By: Alfie O. Tayco



Seed Growers and their produce undergo processes to pass the certification standards.

JARO, Iloilo – To ensure health, quality, and sustainability of seeds sold to RCEF farmers, ATI Region 6, in partnership with the Bureau of Plant Industry – National Seed Quality Services Region 6, conducted a three-day Refresher Course on Inbred Rice Production and Certification last September 28-30, 2021 at WESVIARC Hamungaya, Buntatala, Jaro, Iloilo. Twenty Ilonggo Seed Growers participated in the activity.

The training generally aims to assist and enhance the knowledge, skills, and attitude of inbred rice seed growers in the province whose accreditations are subject to renewal every three years.

Sixto Cabila, Chief of NSQCS Region 6, discussed the mechanics, policies, and guidelines on seed testing and certification for rice during the training. Resource Persons also include Mark Lester Gamboa, who explained the status of implementation of the Rice Program and buffer stocking in the region, and Jenelyn Amosolo who discussed the seed testing procedures and standards. Virginia Agreda, Manager of WESVIARC, also expounded on the varietal selection and characteristics of the approved NSIC varieties. Additionally, Allan Mejares emphasized the role of seed growers in the government seed program.

Ryan V. Rasgo handled the discussion on insect pest management, integrated nutrient management, and integrated cultural management for rice seed production. Participants also explored on seed health of rice crops to ensure quality products with Julius Limjuco.

On the last day of training, Engr. Florida Demamay demonstrated the harvest and post-harvest technology for rice seed production and the importance of rouging during actual field and laboratory practicum and inspection. Certificates were awarded to the finishers and Resource Persons during the Closing Ceremony.

For a constant supply, sufficiency, and availability of certified seeds of inbred varieties in the region, the Department of Agriculture and attached agencies like ATI ensure the continuity of accreditation of seed growers through consistent education and exposure to the latest policies, guidelines, and technologies, specifically in high-quality seed production.

HUGPONG FEDERAL MOVEMENT MEMBERS IN BINALBAGAN, NEGROS OCCIDENTAL TO ADAPT PALAYCHECK SYSTEM

By: Jeflor L. Dela Cruz



The participants conduct insect pest damage and disease assessment/surveillance during the hands-on activity.

BINALBAGAN, Negros Occidental - “This is our first time to attend such training. This is unexpected! We were really surprised by all the new lessons we learned regarding farming. This experience changed our perspectives when it comes to rice farming and the new techniques are helpful for us,” expressed by Adolfo J. Mellizo, one of the 22 participants who attended the Training on PalayCheck System for Hugpong Federal Movement of the Philippines, Inc. (HFMPPI), on his impression during the closing program. The training ran from October 13-15, 2021 at Binalbagan Multi-Purpose Cooperative (BIMEC), Sto. Rosario, Binalbagan, Negros Occidental.

Present during the Opening Program is Ramil Carpio, Deputy Director-Hugpong Federal Movement of the Philippines, Inc. (HFMPPI) of Negros Occidental Chapter; Hon. Alejandro Y. Mirasol, Municipal Mayor; Hon. Ursecio Inodeo, Municipal Vice Mayor; Hon. Danilo Sevilla, Chairman of the Committee on Agriculture; Dr. Armando P. Abañon, Senior Agriculturist of the Office of the Provincial Agriculturist; Mr. Cesar M. Gayem, Municipal Agriculturist; and Dr. Eden DLR Bautista, Center Director of ATI Region 6.

Various topics about KeyChecks 1-9; Rice Industry Situationer; Rice Morphology and Growth Stages; Special Topics on Characteristics of the National/Regional Recommended Varieties (Binhing Palay App); IPM Concepts and Principles; Insect Pests and their Natural Enemies; and Major Diseases and their Management were discussed by the Resource Persons from the Office of the Provincial Agriculturist and ATI Region 6.

A field tour was conducted on the third day of the activity. The participants were able to perform the pest and disease surveillance/assessment. After the training completion, they received after-training support such as a hoe, rake, spade, and cane knife with working clothes and bush hat.

Deputy Director Carpio expressed his words of acknowledgment during the closing program. He is very thankful for another request granted from HFMPPI Negros Occidental Chapter and for bringing the PalayCheck System training to their members.

Dr. Bautista, on the other hand, gave her assurance that there will be another batch of training on Corn and Cassava Production and Processing for the HFMPPI members but the recipients will be coming from another group so that we will be able to reach those who are less privileged members that are directly involved in corn and cassava production. She also challenged the participants to replicate the knowledge that they have gained from the three-day training.

ATI REGION 6 CELEBRATES NATIONAL RICE AWARENESS MONTH

By: Jeflor L. Dela Cruz



The participants and training management team pose the “Panatang Makapalay” after the activity proper.

BANGA, AKLAN – As the rice industry still faces challenges such as dropping of palay prices due to the influx of imported cheap rice to the markets following the passage of the RA 11203 or the Rice Tariffication Law, the Department of Agriculture (DA) alongside with its bureaus and attached agencies continues the advocacy to support our Filipino rice farmers and their efforts in producing local rice and rice-processed products, through different programs from the direction of the Secretary through the National Rice Program.

As part of the annual celebration, ATI-RTC VI conducted a one-day seminar on National Rice Awareness Month

(NRAM) with a Theme: “Be RICEponsibly Healthy” on November 19, 2021, at ATI-RTC VI Training Hall, ASU Compound, Banga, Aklan. A total of 20 participants from various stakeholders in the Province of Aklan composed of SB Member/Chairman of the Committee on Agriculture, Municipal Agriculturist/Municipal Agricultural Officer, and Agricultural Technologists from the Office of the Municipal Agriculture, Rice Farmers and Rice Consumers attended this one-day activity.

The terminal objective of the activity is to raise awareness of the public in the nationwide advocacy initiative that

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ALL ABOARD: The Robelyn M. Japsay Success Story

By: Sheena Angelique D. Zante



A boat is always on standby, ready to transport individuals and goods once the water rises.

Commuters would catch a glimpse of what seems like a brown ocean by the side of the road in Barangay Cogon, Sigma, Capiz. One would wonder how that came to be, considering there are communities that can be viewed from across the waters. Passersby can be perceiving it as a tragic effect of calamities, as rice fields are lying beneath it. But to the people of Barangay Cogon, it is an opportunity for income generation.

When September comes, there would be boats ready to carry about one to two people from the community to the highway to gain access to goods and services. One of these boats is owned by Robelyn M. Japsay, a 43-year-old local farmer living on the highest point of Sitio Balud, of the said barangay.

THE CHALLENGING JOURNEY

In 2018, the community was classified as “vulnerable and hazardous” for being a low-lying area and “catch basin” of water as a result of the Climate Risk Vulnerability Assessment (CRVA) conducted by ATI Region 6 together with the Local Government of Sigma. In the case of Barangay Cogon, torrential rainfall from June to the end of the year result in, sporadically, heavy flooding.

Hence, ATI Region 6, in coordination with LGU Sigma, identified farmers and households as recipients of the Climate Resilient Agriculture (CRA) Program.

One of the beneficiaries of the CRA Program is Robelyn, a wife and mother of two, and currently the Vice President of the Cogon CRA Farmers Association. Her husband is originally the lone farmer and provider of the family. Despite having a humble source of living, life, as she would put it, was tough and unkind, mostly because they lack the capability and resources.

RISING FROM COMPLACENCY

“Ang attitude sang mga tawo di sang una, kuntento na sila. Wala na sila gapangita iban nga pamaagi. Amo nalang kami sini, baton nalang namon. [People would be contented with what they have, they do not look for further means. They just accept their situation and not do much about it]”, recalled Robelyn whenever calamities hit their area. Progress seems unattainable for her community since floods regularly damage crops and plantations. “Wala kami kabalo nga damo gali pwede nga mangin solusyon, [We had not thought of the fact that there are countless solutions]”, she regretfully remembered.

Robelyn dreamed of putting up a Sari-sari Store where she



Two sows are currently under Robelyn's care.

could earn additional income for the family. She also assisted in cultivating their land, in planting vegetable crops for household consumption. They even had a small pigpen. Little did she know that her perseverance would pay off, and it would happen progressively.



Facilities geared towards safety and emergency response is a worthwhile investment for the SPF-driven community of Sitio Balud.

ALL HANDS ON-DECK

Despite not having finished her tertiary education, her determination to access and deliver goods to her clients paved her way to earn extra income during the wet season. Robelyn was determined to provide the needs of her family as her sons are school-aged. The CRA Program opened opportunities for her and her fellow association members through training and mentorship, along with after-training support from ATI. Equipped with the knowledge and skills gained from the trainings that she had attended together with other farmers and the support of her husband, she delved further into farming and gardening sometime in 2020.



Robelyn's sons enjoy their farm-fresh lettuce in snacks like homemade burgers.

“Ang mga training ko sa ATI kag ang mga benchmarking nga ginhimo namon sa iban nga farm kag garden, nagpabakud gid sang akon determinasyon nga makangita paagi sa pag-pananom, [My training with ATI and the benchmarking that we conducted with other farms and gardens solidified my determination to earn from gardening]”, stressed Robelyn. With an estimate of 500 square meters land area, she put up her mini-farm and backyard garden supported by her family.

“Ginakadlawan pa kami sang iban kay, mapula daw amon duta, paano kami kapatubo, [People would laugh at us, they think we cannot succeed due to the state of our soil]”, Robelyn spoke about some challenges, but it never bothered her. Her tenacity pushed her to grow assorted vegetables and crops, practice the Sustainable Pig Farming (SPF) technology, breed assorted poultry and free-range chicken, put up a decent fish pond, assign an area for vermicomposting, establish a mini greenhouse, provide additional support for her husband as they farm and trade rice, and pay-off their sari-sari store loan from private individuals.

Robelyn proudly shares that her children are on-board in tending to the garden and selling their harvest. After a year of saving, they successfully had their comfort room tiled and their kitchen sink repaired and furnished. Furthermore, they were able to invest in household needs like a washing machine and wardrobe cabinet. Her sons were able to purchase second-hand bicycles from their savings, and this motivated the kids to keep contributing to their livelihood.



People would be surprised to see that Robelyn's home is made of concrete, instead of just light materials. She explains that having a solid house is necessary for the people of Cogon.



Robelyn only aims to move forward by being true to herself and her family.

PUTTING ONE FOOT AHEAD OF THE OTHER

Significantly, their life changed. And so did Robelyn's role and reputation around their neighborhood. As her harvest grew, so did the number of people that relied on her for food, especially during calamities. People would buy cucumber, cabbage, lettuce, ladies' fingers, and bitter melon from her garden. Some would message her via Facebook Messenger for reservations. She jokingly subscribes to the thought of flood, because it means income for her. “Pwede gali ka-gardening biskan may baha, [You can succeed in gardening even if your area gets flooded]”. She would also encourage her neighbors to plant for their food supply. She also valued honesty and if people admit to not having any money, she would give



According to her, it is a useful strategy to know what crops can be planted and harvested in a shorter period of time to avoid damages due to the flood.

vegetables for free. “Gusto ko gid ya makabulig kag matudluan man ang mga tawo kung paano mag-tipid, [I aim to help and teach our neighbors to be thrifty]”, Robelyn says thoughtfully.

The Local Government Unit of Capiz and organizations also saw potential in Robelyn's work. In result, her garden won first place in a vegetable gardening contest sponsored by the Office of the Provincial Agriculturist. On top of it, she also won an award from the Department of Education, which recognized house gardening endeavors as part of their Brigada Eskwela campaign.

Because of her farming efforts, and her practices serving as an inspiration to the locality, Robelyn became an important part of the community, as well as the community became a big part of her. By footing one foot ahead of the other, her goals started to materialize.

Having the highest elevation in terms of area, their community chose her land to become the home of the local livestock evacuation center, a facility unique to Western Visayas. CRA Farmers have identified Sustainable Pig Farming as their livelihood and an emergency evacuation center is crucial in sustaining it, hence, ATI Region 6 established the said facility as part of the solution. The evacuation center also serves as a multi-purpose hall where the CRA farmers can conduct training and gatherings.

She cites that the operation and maintenance of the evacuation center is still a challenge, even with the help of her co-members. Her family would end up looking out for all the pigs brought to their area during the floods. Being a leader, however, she asserts to push forward, no matter the hardships. Along with the evacuation center are other grants from the Department

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FIRST VIRTUAL REGIONAL SUMMIT USHERED FOR 4H CLUB

By: Kit O. Apolinario



Selected representatives from 4H Clubs across Region VI and ATI-RTC 6 convenors carried the event out with vigor.

ILOILO CITY – Despite the threat posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, 4H Club steered its first-ever virtual regional summit at the EON Centennial Hotel, Iloilo City, with the theme, ‘Rise of the 4H Era: Reaching Independence in Sustainability and Empowerment of 4H clubs through experiencing the realm of agriculture’. The summit took place last October 15-16, 2021.

“I am hoping that despite the pandemic situation of the country, we can meet the needs of our 4H youth in our local barangays as well as meet the goals and objectives of this 2-day virtual summit”, said Eden DLR. Bautista, Center Director of ATI Region 6, during her message.

4H Ceremonies were done virtually by the Iloilo Province 4H’ers and the Current 4H Provincial presidents. Provincial 4H coordinators gave their words of welcome and greetings to all the delegates and participants of the summit, encouraging the 4H youth to uphold the 4H motto pledge and creed.

During the summit, Mavillo Z. Villorente, ATI Region 6 Section Chief of the Partnerships and Accreditation Services Section, also gave his welcome remarks. “I hope that through this summit, we can help our youth to continuously promote agriculture in each of their barangays to help in community building and development. Despite the limitations of the Covid-19 Pandemic, we are congratulating the whole 4H Team, including the 4H Provincial presidents as well as the out-going 4H Regional president, Mr. Marlo Cabanero.”

The conference was packed with valuable training, which served as encouragement for the 4H youth to continue making the best out of being involved in the field of agriculture.

The 4H Club Agusipan was recognized and awarded as the most active club in the region and is going to represent Region 6 in the National Excellent Achievers Award during the 4H National Summit. Their president, Lourden Oremo, was given the opportunity to share their best practices during the event.

Another highlight of the summit is the virtual Tagisan Ng Talento Contest. The Province of Aklan bested 6 4H’ers from different provinces in the 2-minute speech contest by winning first place. There were also 25 4H’ers from different provinces who won in the virtual Tagisan ng Talino trivia-party contest. The chair of the board of judges and National RBO Focal Person, Jovanne C. Dela Cuadra, expressed excitement by posting, “Before, in 4H Club Contests, I was always the contestant. I can’t believe I am now the Chair of the Board of Judges!”

After the program, the 4H provincial officers conducted an election for the new set of 4H Regional Officers led by the outgoing 4H Regional President, Marlo Cabanero, with the guidance of Vianney T. Ojerio, Alternate 4H/RBO Focal Person, Lyn G. Bantigue, Project Officer and Veronica Tomulto, VLAP President.

This Virtual Regional Summit is proof that despite the pandemic, 4H activities cannot be hindered to give and serve the 4H youth of Region 6 and continue to hone and nourish their skills and talents.

“I am very grateful to our outgoing 4H Regional President, Marlo Cabanero for all the support during his term and good luck to the newly-elected 4H Regional President, Aldren Fuentes. I hope you will continue what was done well, and still make the best better!” said Lyn G. Bantigue, ATI Region 6 Agriculturist II and 4H Regional Focal Person.

The first-ever virtual regional summit was attended by 4H youths from the Provinces of Aklan, Antique, Capiz, Guimaras, Iloilo, and Negros Occidental.

4H CLUB AGUSIPAN (ILOILO) BAGS FIRST PLACE IN THE NATIONAL 4H EXCELLENT ACHIEVERS AWARD 2020 AND SECOND PLACE IN THE PROMOTIONAL VIDEO-MAKING CONTEST

By: Kit O. Apolinario



A proud moment for Lourden Oremo, 4-H Club Agusipan President as he bags the first place in the National 4H Excellent Achievers Award 2020: Economic and Sustainable Development (Hands) Category and second place in the Promotional Video-Making Contest.

WESTERN VISAYAS – 4H Club Agusipan in Iloilo bags the first place in the National 4H Excellent Achievers Award 2020: Economic and Sustainable Development (Hands) Category and second place in the Promotional Video-Making Contest during the 4-H Club National Summit 2020 with the theme: “RISE of the 4-Her (Reaching Independence, Sustainability and Empowerment of the 4-H Clubs amidst the Pandemic”.

Lourden Oremo, 4-H Club Agusipan President, bested the rest of all other regions in the whole country with the unending support of Dr. Eden DLR. Bautista, Center Director of ATI Region 6 and Lyn G. Bantigue, 4H Point Person.

The category Economic and Sustainable Development (Hands) showcase the agri-entrepreneurial skills that positively uplift and help greatly impact the economic living conditions of the community and push for sustainable development through agri-entrepreneurship and agri-business initiatives.

Another winner from the region is John Denver Sabando, Provincial President of 4H Club Iloilo for the 4H Trivia Party Contest. While, Christine Hope Pagsuguiron, a Member of 4H Club Aklan, joined the two-minute Speech Contest.

The 4-H Club conducts one National Summit every year which aims to provide approaches and encouragement and hone agri-entrepreneurial skills, values formation, and leadership across the Philippines.

FITS STAFF AND MAGSASAKANG SIYENTISTA OF WESTERN VISAYAS DELVE INTO THE DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE NEW NORMAL

By: Liezel Margie Lou S. Bastian-Ocheda



Some FITS Centers’ Staff from the provinces of Capiz and Guimaras take a pose during the closing ceremony.

MANDURRIO, Iloilo City – More than 70 Farmers’ Information and Technology Services (FITS) Center Staff and Magsasakang Siyentista (MS) assemble for the two-day 3rd Regional Techno Gabay Summit with the theme:

Delving into Digital Infrastructure in the New Normal on December 9-10, 2021, at the MO2 Westtown Hotel.

The first day of the activity commenced with ribbon-cutting and the launching of the MS Product Exhibition. The program proper opened with a review of FITS and MS roles and responsibilities and by-laws as well as the presentation of the criteria in choosing the best performing FITS Centers in the Region by Nicolasita G. Gallego, ATI Region 6’s Information Services Section Chief and Information Officer III. It was then followed by updates on Techno Gabay Program (TGP) implementation at the National Level by Erica Vizcarra, ATI National TGP Focal Person.

In the afternoon, Jolymar Cadunggan, Agriculturist I of DA RFO VI, introduced the Rice Crop Manager Advisory

Services Rebuild that can help them in assisting rice farmers to recommend appropriate rice varieties in their assigned areas.

The second day was filled with knowledge-sharing through a short talk by Joie Cruz, CEO of Limitless Lab Inc., on Exploring Digital Infrastructure towards New Normal and Christine Mae Tubera, ATI Region 6’s Agriculturist I, on Recalibrating Strategies through Agri Apps.

The highlight of the event was the distribution of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools such as a printer, desktop, GPS, and tablet to some FITS Centers in the Region. Moreover, three newly-established FITS Centers in the municipalities of Valderrama, Bugasong, and San Jose in Antique received a catalytic fund worth Php 100, 000.

DAC FOR RCEF LEAPS OFF IN ANTIQUE AND ILOILO

By: Sheena Angelique D. Zante



Evoyne Mae Galvan and NFOTEC team were assigned a demo back discussion on Agri Apps and Advanced Social Media Marketing prior culmination of Iloilo leg.

WESTERN VISAYAS – To prepare and enable farm schools in implementing digital literacy training for RCEF, the Regional Training of Trainers on Digital Agriculture Course for RCEF (DAC for RCEF) was executed with an upstart session in Antique last October 20-22, 2021 at Kinaray-a Hotel, San Jose, Antique followed by Iloilo last October 27-29, 2021 at Zuri Hotel, Mandurriao, Iloilo City. Participants hailed from farm institutions across Antique, Iloilo, and Negros Occidental.

DAC for RCEF is a short course developed by ATI with member agencies of the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) and is centered on the learning materials of the Digital Farmers' Program (DFP) with the incorporation of rice-related agriculture applications. Instructional materials were clustered into two modules, DAC for RCEF 101 and 102.

Trainers of TESDA-accredited farm schools were called into the opportunity to be oriented in new media technology topics on Information and Communications Technology Tools, Agriculture Applications, Social Media Content Creation and Marketing, Internet Safety, Mobile Money and e-commerce. Furthermore, they were advised on the implementation of the training structure, programs, required documentation, and feedback processes.

A total of 40 participants gained their Certificate of Completion after the submission and evaluation of their recorded micro-teaching sessions to ATI Region 6 five days after the training proper.

FARMERS OF NEGROS OCCIDENTAL UNDERGONE TRAINING ON CASSAVA PROCESSING AND VALUE-ADDING

By: Eligrace Z. San Buenaventura



A participant in-action during the demonstration/preparation of Pichi-pichi and Cassava Cake as an output in Cassava Processing.

BINALBAGAN, Negros Occidental – To equip the participants with knowledge and skills in the production and food processing technologies of cassava, the Agricultural Training Institute–Regional Training Center VI conducted a Training on Cassava Production and Value Adding at Binalbagan Multi-Purpose Cooperative (BIMEC) on November 15-18, 2021.

The training focused on the values orientation of the qualities, 20 participants from the said province must possess to succeed as an individual and in farming. Various topics such as Cultural Management Practices in Cassava Production, Cassava Processing, Concept and Guidelines in Packaging Food and Non-Food Products were discussed by the Resource Persons from ATI Region 6 and the Office of the Provincial Agriculturist of Negros Occidental.

The resource person also demonstrated the steps in the preparation of cassava processing and the participants were able to prepare different food products out of cassava – Pichi-pichi, Cassava Pancake, and Cassava Cake.

The participants received after-training support which includes a three-layer steamer pan and one long sleeve together with Certificates of Completion.

SMALL-HOLDER ORGANIC FARMERS OF ILOILO EMPOWERED THROUGH PGS



The participants do the inspection in the field at Namocon Farmers Association Integrated Organic Farm for the Peer Review.

TIGBAUAN, Iloilo – “This 3-day activity provided us with the opportunity to appreciate ICS in preparation for the PGS. So many topics were excellently tackled and discussed. Thanks, ATI for giving us the best trainers. Thank you and congratulations!” expressed by Lily P. Maligaya, one of the 19 participants who attended the three-day training on Organic Agriculture: Appreciation on Installation of Internal Control System for Small Holder Organic Farmers towards Participatory Guarantee System at Sol y Mar Beach Resort on November 22-24, 2021.

The participants have undergone a blended type of training. Modules 1 and 2 were discussed via Zoom, presented by Jet Orbida, while the rest were addressed face-to-face by ECOVERITAS Consulting Agency's Patrick B. Belisario. They were presented with the topics about Agriculture Act, its amendments, and implementing rules and regulations, as well as the Organic Agriculture Standard. Additionally, the establishment of PGS consistent with the organic agriculture standards set by the Philippine National Standards (PNS) was also discussed.

On the third day of the training, Mr. Belisario facilitated Field Inspection at Namocon Farmers Association Integrated Organic Farm to ensure that the trainees have an excellent background on the validation forms. The data they acquired also served as an output for the Peer Review Module.

At the end of the training, Dr. Eden DLR. Bautista, Center Director of ATI Region 6, stated her commendation and encouraged the trainees to cascade and implement the knowledge they have obtained during the three-day training.

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ANTIQUENO FARMERS SOAR...

farmer, and because of that, my family is never hungry. And the School-on-the-Air on Nutrient Management is a big help because I learned how to apply the right kind of fertilizer and other technologies in my farming practice].”

With the content of the SOA on INM under RCEF modules centering on fertilizer and nutrient management, Eden DLR Bautista, ATI Region 6 Center Director, appealed for the local legislators to align their future policies to the Organic Agriculture Act of 2010, as part of the campaign to minimize the use of synthetic fertilizers on rice crops. “Hindi naman kaagad-agad na iconvert into organic, amat-amat lang. [The conversion to organic farming doesn't have to be abrupt, you can approach it gradually],” campaigned Bautista during her message.

The support of the Office of the Provincial Agriculturist, through the leadership of Nicolasito Calawag, was also recognized by the ATI Region 6 Training Management Team as a significant contributor to the success of the training.

The event was conducted in two days in consideration of the health protocols of the Province of Antique.

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ATI REGION 6 CELEBRATES...

aims to promote responsible rice consumption through the non-wastage of rice, consumption of healthier rice, and boost farmers' morale that will altogether contribute towards the attainment of rice sufficiency and food security in the country.

Rodel R. Leyson, Project Officer discussed the Updates on Western Visayas' Rice Industry Situation. While Josephine R. Pajo, Associate Professor I of Aklan State University discussed the topic on the Culinary Use, Nutrition Facts, and Health Benefits of Rice. The recital of Panatang Makapalay was done to elicit the commitment of various stakeholders towards practicing and influencing responsible and healthy rice consumption and patronizing local rice farmers.

All the twenty participants received 50kgs of well-milled rice as a token of appreciation for responding to our invitation and in celebrating the said activity.

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ALL ABOARD...

of Agriculture that their association has to manage. A hatcher and incubator were provided for the utilization of farmers in the area, for example. “Kinanglan pa gid namon training para mas

mag-kabalo kami sa pag-operate sa mga ginpang-hatag namon. Mangita gid kami bulig, [“We need training to effectively operate all the opportunities provided to us. We will ask for further help”] she planned.

SAILING ONWARDS

Similar to her association, Robelyn aspires for her home. She wants to improve her fish pond, give it solid protection from the floods. “Ang taga-DA, may nag-feedback abi sa akon nga posible mas dako ang kitaon sa fish pond kesa sa baboy, [I have been advised that income is possibly higher from fish ponds compared to hog farming.]” she hoped. A bigger greenhouse would also boost her operations. She dreams of a greenhouse much like what she saw in Boracay, from ATI's project for the Ati community. A larger vermicomposting bed would also help in the sustainability of the garden. On top of it all, she calls for a sufficient water supply system to address existing struggles experienced by the locality. All of those goals will be achieved in good time, according to Robelyn. In the meantime, Robelyn would like to focus on urgent challenges, specifically the state of the family's dilapidated boat and a recent incident that rendered it useless.

“Mapahimo kami tani mas dako nga bangka, para mas damo maikarga kag mabaligya nga ani kag feeds, [We will have a bigger boat constructed, so we can load and trade more harvest and transport bigger amounts of feeds,” Robelyn aimed. In this new undertaking, it is safe to say that Robelyn considered steps not just for her family. In thoughts and actions, her community would be all aboard.



SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

