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BOLD MOVE WITH A BRAVE HEART, THE PESTALES QUEST TO CHANGE

Pestales Braveheart Farm | Argao



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Editorial Board

EDITORS

MA. GRACIA SOLIVA-PUNGAY
MERRIAN PIQUERO-SOLIVA, PhD

WRITERS

MARYJANE FLOR PATULILIC
SHANEMIE CARELLE D. PRADERA
MERRIAN PIQUERO-SOLIVA, PhD
DORIS ISABEL J. RACHO

COVER DESIGN

MA. PAMELA RESPECIA-MACAAMBAC

LAYOUT

SHANEMIE CARELLE D. PRADERA

CONSULTANT

GRACIA F. ARADO, PhD



WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU

ATI-RTC 7 Training Complex,
Cabawan District, Tagbilaran City
6300 Bohol, Philippines
+63917.321.8524 | 038.411.3661
aticv.7@gmail.com; ati_7cv@yahoo.com
www.ati.da.gov.ph/ati-7

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On our cover features
Pestales Braveheart Farm
from Argao, Cebu



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(n) Cebuano-Bisaya term
for development

Bohol Participatory Guarantee System Association Members Awarded Participatory Organic Certificate by Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Standards (BAFS)

by Maryjane Flor S. Patulilic



TAGBILARAN CITY, **BOHOL.** The Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Standards (BAFS) awarded the Participatory Organic Certificate (POC) to five members of the Bohol Participatory Guarantee System Association (BPGSA). This recognition was given during the closing program of the 2023 Bohol Agri Fair held at the Old Airport, this city on July 19, 2023.

The five deserving recipients of the POC are Jomer M. Balag, Rona C. Deque, Efrenia C. Holt, Marilou M. Escalona, and Emmanuel A. Gamonez. Each member has received the POC for a specific scope. Jomer M. Balag focuses on crop production and beekeeping, Rona C. Deque specializes in

special products, particularly mushroom cultivation, Efrenia C. Holt focuses on crop production and processing, Marilou M. Escalona is in both animal and crop production, and Emmanuel A. Gamonez is on agricultural input, crop production, and processing. With the POC, these five farmers are now given the privilege to label and sell their products as organic.

It is also noteworthy to mention that the organic soil amendment (OSA) product of Mr. Gamonez is the first certified under the Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) wherein majority of the OSA in the market are third-party certified. Ms. Holt's chocolate

certified. Ms. Holt's chocolate and tablea is also the first certified organic chocolate and tablea in the country under the PGS scheme.

On the other note, four of these five certified organic farms are learning sites of the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) in the region: the Green Garden of Hope which is owned by Mr Gamonez, the Egay's Farm which is owned by Ms. Escalona, the Green Thumb Farm which is owned by Rona C. Deque, and the Jolit's Eco Garden Integrated Farm which is owned by Mr. Balag. This is a significant milestone to the learning sites for agriculture of ATI.

To be continued on page 6

The Power of Delegation: Maximizing Leadership Potential

REGIONWIDE. With the global COVID pandemic and ensuing rapid shifts, the pace of change that organizations face today has moved into overdrive. Leaders must be prepared to adapt to continuous disruption, and to lead their teams in new and innovative ways.

Leadership trust creates the stable foundation for employees and their organizations to flex, adapt, and thrive in times of continuous change.

In this regard, two (2) batches of training on Maximizing Leadership Potential: Building Trust for Agricultural Extension Workers (AEWs) from different provinces in Region VII was held on July 25-27, 2023 at One Central Hotel, Cebu City, and August 01-03, 2023 at ATI-RTC VII Government Complex, Tagbilaran City, Bohol, respectively.

This training aimed to enhance knowledge, skills, and attitude of the participants to become competent leaders through organizational management in order to function effectively, manage and influence other employees in the workplace.

A total of 42 participants were trained under Atty. Alma E. Aparece with her topic on Friendship and Community Organizing; Good Communication in Community Organizing; Power of Goodness; The Organizer in the Community; Gaining Entry into the Community; Organizing the Community; Engaging the Community; Looking at Dynamics in the Community; Transformation Festival.

"I am so happy that I am able to attend this training. I have learned to embrace self-affirmation and be sensitive to others. A leader must learn the process of empathy. Self-respect is also important as you cannot give what you do not have," expressed Daisy Marie Gesim of LGU Bais City, Negros Oriental.

Ms. Maryjane Flor Patulilic served as the Project Officer for this training with Mr. Moises Zem F. Jayectic (Batch 1) and Gertrude Grace B. Solijon (Batch 2).



ATI-7 joins Sandugo Agri Fair Anew

BOHOL. The Agricultural Training Institute in Central Visayas joined this year's Sandugo Agri Fair spearheaded by the Provincial Government of Bohol (PGBh) through the Office of the Provincial Agriculturist (OPA) at the Old Tagbilaran City Airport on July 17, 2023 with the theme "Kayutaan ug Kadagatan Palambuon Subay sa Hagit sa Panahon".

Governor Erico Aristotle Aumentado led the ribbon-cutting ceremony to open the fair which was also highlighted by messages of support from the different participating agencies.

As part of the Sandugo Festival 2023 commemoration, Aumentado oversaw the introduction of the three-day fair, which started concurrently with the nationwide launch of the Kadiwa ng Pangulo (KNP) centers.

The participating Local Government Units (LGUs) are: Antequera, Balilihan, Batuan, Bilar, Bien Unido, Buenavista, Calape, Carmen, Catigbian, Clarin, Corella, Cortes, Danao, Dimiao, Duero, Getafe, Guindulman, Lila, Loboc, Loon, Mabini, Panglao, Pilar, San Miguel, Sikatuna, Tagbilaran, Talibon, Ubay and Valencia. The 29 LGUs showcased fresh and affordable agricultural items like; rice, vegetables, and fruits, as well as processed commodities, agri-based products, and indigenous local crafts.

Moreover, ATI - 7 disseminated various Information Education and Communication (IEC) materials to agri-fair goers during the three-day activity from rice, corn, livestock, high value crops and organic farming.

This year's Sandugo Agri-Fair does not only feature produce and products from LGUs but also experiential learning activities of Boholano traditional agricultural practices such as: rice pounding, traditional stone corn grinding, coconut grating, karamata riding, bangus deboning, net mending, and puso making.



Five Trainees Graduate from Pre-Departure Orientation Course (PDOC) Agri-related Training for the Filipino Young Farmers Internship Program in Taiwan (FYFIPT) Batch 2023

REGIONWIDE. Five young Filipino farmer interns flew to Taiwan to participate in an 11-month internship program that will teach them new global agricultural methods and concepts that will help them start a profitable agribusiness.

The five interns from Central Visayas are as follows: (1) ARGIE B. MATAS of Ginatilan, Cebu; (2) CZAR DAVID AMBAIC of Catigbian, Bohol; (3) MERVEN L. ALMEDILLA of Loon, Bohol; (4) RYAN V. LOBRIDO of La Libertad, Negros Oriental; and (5) JHON FRANCES DELA ROSA of Sibulan, Negros Oriental.

The chosen interns completed online Mandarin Language and Culture lessons from May 4 to June 14, 2023; a Pre-Departure Orientation Course (PDOC) Agri-related Training course between June 19 to July 21, 2023; and their flight for Taiwan was scheduled last August.

The young farmers were sent to Taiwan to take part in the Filipino Young Farmers Internship Program (FYFIP). The Department of Agriculture (DA) collaborates with the Manila Economic and Cultural Office (MECO) and the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in the Philippines (TECO), with the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) serving as the principal implementing agency.

The alliance hopes to strengthen ties by implementing an internship program suitable for young Filipino farmers. It entails acquiring skills and information through modern agriculture and fishery practices such as value chain management, cooperative management, and the development of competencies,

Cultivating Excellence: Unveiling Insights from the National Convention on Philippine Association of Extension Program Implementers

TAGBILARAN CITY, BOHOL. Extension workers and program implementers from various regions came together, fostering networking and collaboration. This collaboration can lead to joint initiatives, resource sharing, and mutual support.

With workshops, seminars, and presentations on the newest trends, technology, and implementation techniques for extension programs, the convention also offers possibilities for professional development.

Thirty (30) participants from other national government agencies, state universities, and other stakeholders in Region VII attended the activity.

Agricultural Training Institute – Regional Training Center (ATI-RTC) VII joined the 8th National Convention on Philippine Association of Extension Program Implementers (PAEPI) organized by the PAEPI in partnership with Bohol Island State University (BISU) held at the Metro Center Hotel, Tagbilaran City on August 16, 2023.

Through discussions and workshops, the convention addressed challenges faced by extension workers, seeking solutions to enhance the resilience and sustainability of agricultural extension services.

Facilitating the activity is Ms. Merigine C. Otara, Planning Officer II of ATI-RTC VIII.

ATI National Director Engr. Remelyn Recoter was one of the Guest Speakers during the said activity.



Nurturing the Green Future: Empowering Youth through Innovative Agriculture Capability

DUMAGUETE CITY, NEGROS ORIENTAL. Youth participation in agriculture guarantees a strong and dynamic labor force dedicated to overcoming the world's food security issues through increased productivity, crop diversification, and the adoption of resilient farming techniques.

In addition, capability enhancement trainings encourage youth to actively participate in community development, leading to the revitalization of rural areas through improved agriculture, infrastructure, and social services.

With this, the Agricultural Training Institute in Central Visayas implemented the Capability Enhancement Trainings for Youth in Agriculture (Agripreneurship Program) at Manhattan Suites Inn on August 29-31, 2023 with 20 pax trained.

The program generally aimed to holistically empower the youth to become agripreneurs and viable partners in agricultural development.

"With the proper training, with the right guidance, and with the people surrounding you, your business idea will definitely be possible. I thank all the speakers who gave their time and shared their expertise to us. I learned a lot of things, especially for someone like me who doesn't really have an inkling on business. I hope one day my business idea will be given a chance and I'll have the capability and resources to make it happen. May pera sa pagsasaka, has now become the mindset I want to live by. I wanted to use this opportunity and learning for good. I want to improve our life, my family, and one day I hope to achieve financial freedom," shared Nova Veraley Grafe, a 4-H Club member from Sibulan, Negros Oriental.

Equipped with enhanced skills, youth become valuable assets to the agricultural workforce, leading to increased employment opportunities within the sector and helping counteract rural-to-urban migration trends.



Bohol Participatory Guarantee... continuation

The PGS certification offers a more accessible and cost-effective avenue for these farmers to penetrate the organic market while fostering trust and building relationships with consumers and the local community. PGS is considered an alternative approach to the traditional third-party certification systems provided by international organic organizations.

The BPGSA is now taking significant steps towards becoming an organic certifying body (OCB). Once accredited as an OCB, the association can conduct peer reviews and certify its members as organic practitioners. This certification ensures that these farmers meet the necessary standards for organic production. BPGSA has already drafted its own set of criteria and standards for organic production, highlighting their commitment to promoting and upholding organic farming practices.

This latest achievement by the BPGSA highlights their dedication and efforts in promoting organic farming in Bohol. The recognition and certification provide validation for the members' hard work and serve as a tangible proof of their commitment to sustainable and organic agricultural practices. As they move forward, the BPGSA aims to continue its mission of supporting organic farmers and fostering a thriving organic market in Bohol.

Harvesting Trust: The Crucial Role of Certified Participatory Guarantee System Groups in Organic Certification

TAGBILARAN CITY, BOHOL. The presence of Certified Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) Groups in the organic certification process holds significant importance especially for budding organic farmers on a budget.

PGS involves farmers and local stakeholders in the certification process, fostering community-led verification. This not only builds trust but also ensures that the certification reflects the agricultural practices of the community.

PGS is more accessible to smallholder farmers who may face challenges in complying with the high costs and stringent requirements of conventional certification.

This inclusivity promotes the participation of a diverse range of farmers in organic practices.

With this, the Agricultural Training Institute – Regional Training Center (ATI-RTC) VII conducted a Training on Certified PGS

Towards Accreditation as Organic Certifying Bodies (Batch 2) held at ATI-RTC 7 Training Complex, Cabawan District, this city on August 7-11, 2023.

Twenty (20) trained participants from Bohol will conduct and serve as resource persons to the training for certified groups on PGS towards accreditation as Organic Certifying Body (OCB).

"I learned several things here: Development of Manual of Operations, get Acquainted with the Guidelines for the accreditation of Core PGS Group and Operations as OCB, Alignment of Internal Standard of the PGS Group, General Protocols and principles of peer review and certification, accreditation of Core PGS Groups as OCB and Auditing Protocols. I'm really happy to be part of this training. I learned so much and will bring this to my workplace. Since the farm is certified as organic, the learnings on conducting peer review and accreditation. Also, the records, maintaining/updating of records is my objective here. Looking forward to apply all I encountered and imparted by our trainers for a progressive group and individual farms," shared Lindon Bagares from Egay's Integrated Farm.



organic agriculture activities
by shanemie carelle d. pradera

COVER story 
by: merrian piquero soliva, phd



Bold move with a brave heart
the Pestales' quest to change



Just like anybody else, our perception of Pestales is automatic. We associate them, with a family name or surname, or for others, it is a place and a religious denomination. However, none of us are correct because, PESTALES is an acronym that stands for "People's Empowerment through Social, Technological, Active Livelihood Economic Services" but in 2021, it was amended to "People's Ecosystem for Societal Transformation, Advanced Leadership and Economic Sustainability," an Agricultural Cooperative duly registered with the Cooperative Development Authority.

But, on one note, we at least agreed, that Pestales is a farm, whose goal is to promote sustainable agriculture through organic farming and live by their mantra: "from farm to table, value adding to generate income and change lives for the better."



How Pestales started?

In 2014, three (3) women who became friends in Manila the likes of Rodelyn F. Gabayoyo (Bacolod), Delia Bargamento (Surigao del Sur), and Jenalyn A. Entoy (Masbate) agreed to take a vacation in Rodelyn's Province. There, they met her friends, Raymund C. Alpon and his wife, Cristy. Then, the group proceeded to Cebu for a vacation and met Melodina Esconde, a farmer's daughter of Barangay Calerohan, Dalaguete Cebu, who also tagged along another friend, Mark Anthony C. Luaña of Catmon, Cebu.

The five of them stayed at Melodina's house for 2-weeks and never thought, that the short period of time, made Jenalyn's life turn 180 degrees. She witnessed how farmers suffered because of middlemen's unjust treatment of buying their produce (chayote at P1/kilo and cabbage at P10/kilo) which they manually transport from the hinterland to the town proper. Such lamentation worsened, when these farmers shared their story that they do not have the means to tap government services because they can only write and read, but can't speak and comprehend English.

With that experience, it was Jenalyn's idea to come back to Cebu to help these farmers by translating her advocacy into reality that is, sustainable agriculture through

organic farming. After sorting all her life in Manila, both personal and her job, she presented her plan to her other 2 friends, and without hesitation or doubt, they all agreed, packed their things and their journey began in the same year.

When they arrived in Cebu, they started organizing a core group advocating sustainable agriculture where Raymund and Cristy Alpon with Mark Anthony C. Luaña joined in, reaching out to friends for possible networks and collaboration. With Jenalyn's sheer passion for working with people, being a child of a farmer/fisher father and farmer-mother from Masbate, she met Juan Lapa of Argao, Cebu who happened to acquire a 200 square meter lot on an installment basis. Unfortunately, Juan is incapable of sorting finances to pay the lot in full because of his family's financial dire need.

Hence, Jenalyn offered to assume the lot via staggered through the income of their agri-herbal products. The lot became their quarter that sits in the processing center of their 10n1 Moringeric and other Agri-herbal produce.

Pestales, thriving against all odds

The success of Pestales is not laden with sugar and spice because they hurdled their ups and downs with grace. Among the challenges that they met was when they were tagged and accused as thieves, rebels, maute group that supports ISIS, and worse, killers. They were even summoned by two (2) barangays

to be scrutinized for the reason that their agriculture activity was only a frontline with rebellion allegedly at hand.

There were even instances that during night time, they were thrown with stones and their dogs were killed sending messages that they were next. Branding them as cults and threatening government agencies who wish to visit them to extend intervention to retreat because they will not return in one piece. They even exhausted all their savings in order to make the farm run, where, the first 23 founding families voluntarily became members because they were positive that Pestales would make their life productive and changed. However, without a track record to prove and no proper registration to present to possible funders, the core group had a hard time meeting ends, hence, they ate porridge or lugaw in Cebuano vernacular for seven (7) long months.

With their drive to make a change, parents made kakanins or desserts like Salbaro (native bread made from pounder sun-dried and fried cassava), hotcakes, and ice candy which their children sell to the streets and proceeds will be for the community's food consumption. With meager sales, the core group learned to eat their produce vegetables raw with camote/taro/cassava as their source of carbohydrates, making them, vegetarian, a healthy practice, and discovered that some of their illnesses were cured. Until such time, the community embraced the kind of diet they have had since 2017 until to date.

Meanwhile, the children of the family are active community members and potential leaders. They even organized the Pestales 4H Club and held National Certificates (NC II). These children were sent to school and Pestales made sure to bring and fetch them every day for safety because of their profound love of the farm, most of them, stopped until they reached 12th grade. Their purpose is to make Pestales sustainable, so that, at their tender ages, they will become the next generation to run the cooperative, hence, they made sure that they are equipped with enough skills and knowledge, through the tutelage of the founding members.

From 23 founding members, they already have 37 households and counting in the community and are now slowly being recognized by the Local Government Unit of Argao, Cebu.

With all the challenges that they have hurdled day by day, the Pestales community agreed to never give up. They always gambled and were not afraid of taking the risk. They always planned ahead, have meetings every now and then, strategize on their own, and pray together for

enlightenment and blessings.

The Rise of Pestales Eco Village and Pestales Agriculture Cooperative

It was in 2016 when Pestales registered as a cooperative, wherein, they wanted for so long to have a legal identity. In 2017, someone offered them 2.8 hectares for farm development (a variety of vegetables and crops planted with a small area for livestock). Due to the absence of the Memorandum of Agreement with the owner, the operation stopped in 2018.

In 2019, Pestales Eco Village, a 3,000 square meter area was acquired by the cooperative with a garden, and centers for processing, wellness, training, and pasalubong were established plus a housing facility for its members. These were realized through the support of LifeBank Micro Finance Foundation through then Vice-President, Nicanor Perlas who granted them 3.1 Million pesos.

Pestales Braveheart Farm (PBF)

In the same year, when the COVID-19 Pandemic threatened the entire humanity, Pestales acquired another 6.4 hectares of land in Jampang, Argao, Cebu, duly financed by LifeBank Micro Finance Foundation through a soft loan with zero interest. This is where the Pestales Braveheart Farm (PBF) sits in.

PBF, is an accredited Learning Site for Agriculture (LSA) of the Agricultural Training Institute-Regional Training Center 7 in 2017 and renewed last March 7, 2019, and also an accredited farm school of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) on June 11, 2021.

The farm produces a variety of organically grown vegetables, crops, and herbs. Livestock, tilapia, and mushroom production. The farm offered six (6) competencies, to wit: a) Raise Organic Chicken; b) Produce Organic Vegetable; c) Produce Organic Fertilizer; d) Produce Organic Concoctions and Extracts; e) Raise Organic Hogs and f) Raise Organic Small Ruminants. There are already four (4) batches conducted on the farm with 136 graduates from nearby municipalities of Cebu Province.

They also conducted trainings like inner conditioning, disaster preparedness, simple book keeping and basic accounting for agri-preneurs. Moreover, there are also visitors who come just for a quick day tour and the farm offers vegetarian menus with juices for both walk-in visitors and accepts catering services.



COVER story
by merrian piquero-soliva ph.d

They are now considered as millionaire cooperative in the Province of Cebu who touched so many lives not just farmers but fishers to youths and other agriculture advocates.

The men and women behind the PBF who are also the Board of Directors (BOD) of the Pestales Agriculture Cooperative (PAC) are as follows: Ms. Jenalyn A. Entoy, Founder and Chief Executive Officer and BOD Chairperson, who is the all-in charge of the projects, overseer in its proper management, responsible in finding fund sources like grants, established linkages and networks. A strong woman and a dedicated leader. An advocate for sustainable agriculture/organic farming, youth development, and healthy lifestyle. Thus, recognized as among the awardees of the International Filipino Leader during the Ladies of All Nations International World Summit 2023 held in Manila, Philippines on October 19, 2023. As an awardee, among the perks include a wide network and linkage among women leaders, funders, and philanthropists all over the world.

Meanwhile, Mr. Mark Anthony C. Luaña is the BOD Vice Chairperson, who is in charge of the farm school at the same time Trainer and Assessor of PAC and Chairman of the Education and Training Committee.

Ms. Rodelyn F. Gabayoyo is the project proposal development officer who handles all papers and documentation. Mr. Raymund C. Alpon took charge of the Marketing and most of the time attended and participated in seminars and summits while Mr. Noli E. Salibongcogon is the point person on their Massage and Reflexology and at

the same time on the construction projects respectively.

The farm was named "BRAVEHEART" because the community never gave up on all the challenges, issues, and problems that they encountered and brought Pestales to where they are right now. Besides, it really takes courage and a brave heart to be sustainable and successful in every endeavor they have undertaken.

The success of Pestales Agriculture Cooperative is greatly attributed to the member-families who labored for the success of the farm. They even once tilled the land without monetary return, all they have in their mind and heart is for the betterment of the community where they live. Today, these families not just spend time on the communal farm, rather, they are also developing their area within their households so that the cooperative will consolidate and buy their produce. This will form part of their family's income aside from the benefits they have received from the cooperative, that is free of rent including water and electricity bills. This is because they are one-big family, helping each other from better or down times.

Moreso, the Pestales is active in all trade fairs and exhibits wherein they can showcase all their agri-products and other farm activities. In fact, as a manifestation of their dedication to spread what Pestales can offer, they organized an Organic Farmers' Festival for three (3) years now, also consolidate market fresh produce of farmers every Wednesday and Saturday to let the public know that they have what they can offer, because, they walk the talk.

Among of the many significant strides of PAC includes media mileage where they were featured to almost all mainstream media such as G-Diaries of ABS-CBN, Balitang Bisdak-GMA Regional TV, My TV Channel on My Destination Program as well as to DA's Biyaheng Agibiz and Ani Ug Kita.

Apart from these, PAC also assisted 10 Farmer Associations through Community of Organic Natural Farmers and Fisherfolks' Federation (CONFFED). Developed proposals to subsidize them with worth One Hundred Thousand Pesos (P100,000.00) and now on its second phase to award another five (5) winner associations.

The power of partnership, dedication, and trust

Pestales Braveheart Farm members have a strong bond with each other, so with their partners who are from government agencies. They made sure that they maintained good relationships with them for ease of doing undertakings.

The Department of Agriculture-Regional Field Unit 7 (DA-RFO 7) is among the first agencies that provided assistance to them through the Livelihood Enhancement for Agricultural Development (LEAD) Program, which is to speed up farmers' organizations' access to financing, management expertise, and marketing in 2018. Aside from this, they also provide funding for the development of agri-herbal processing through the Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Division (AMAD) and the Organic Agriculture Livelihood Program for Mushroom Production. They also gave several trainings and workshops and linked them to possible institutional buyers and provided markets through KADIWA Outlets and various exhibits and trade fairs. They also recognized Pestales Braveheart Farm as Gawad Saka Awardee as an "Outstanding Small Farmer Organization" on May 10, 2023.

The Department of Agriculture-Agricultural Training Institute-Regional Training Center 7 (DA-ATI-RTC 7) also played a great role in Pestales Braveheart Farm, because they are the ones who accredit them as Learning Site for Agriculture and also provided grant funding twice for their Enhancement of Training Center and Acquisition of Farm Tools and Equipment as well as capacitates key staff through training and seminars particularly on Organic Agriculture Production NCII at St. Peter Academy Alegria Foundation Inc.



Meanwhile, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) also provided them with machinery and equipment for their processing as well as training on Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) and Food Safety.

The Department of Science and Technology (DOST) also helped them in the analysis of their agri-herbal products as well as the provision of training.

Pestales' quest to change lives

The road taken by the Pestales Braveheart Farm and Pestales Agriculture Cooperative is no easy feat, because, they were not only making a difference in the community, but they too have a mission to change lives for the better among members.

As Ms. Jenalyn had put it, they wanted to extend their gratitude to people who were not so fond of them, especially during their early years, because they were instruments for them to strive more on what can they do good to the members and the community in general.

She also acknowledged wholeheartedly those who stand by them as they thrive and became agents to affect change in the lives of the people who believe in them and she further encouraged them to treasure friendship, because, they are what they become now even with the test of time.

Pestales Agriculture Cooperative is certainly true to its calling which is to have their heart brave enough so they can linger strongly in everything that comes their



Nurturing Financial Excellence in Coconut

REGIONWIDE. For many tropical regions, coconut harvesting is a key source of income. Many farmers rely on it, and likewise supports adjacent sectors like food processing, cosmetics, and pharmaceuticals.

Because practically every part of the coconut tree can be used, thus referred to as the "tree of life". A wide variety of goods can be made from coconuts, such as copra, coconut milk, coconut water, coconut oil, and other byproducts. The industry benefits economically from this diversity.

Moreover, a large number of people can find work in the coconut industry, from field laborers to those who process and sell goods.

In this regard, a Training of Trainers (TOT) on Coconut Farm Business School (FBS) was held at Lamac Multi-Purpose Cooperative (MPC) Cocohub, Barangay Colonia, Tuburan, Cebu on July 17-27, 2023 with 27 participants from across the region composed of Agricultural Extension Workers (AEWs), farm owners, and other agriculture enthusiast.

The training aimed to enhanced the participants knowledge and skills on coconut production to be able to deliver topics effectively and efficiently as trainers of the Farm Business School for Farmer Level.

"Ang akong nakat-onan o impression sa atong school on the air, tungod kay daghan kaayo ko ug nakat-onan kabahin sa pagpananom sa lubi, salamat sa nagpasiugda niining school on the air ang ATI, ilabi na sa nga produkto kabahin sa lubi. Para nako nakatabang gyud ang skwelahan sa kahanginan tungod kay ilang gihatag ang mga teknolohiya kong unsaon ang insaktong pagpananom sa lubi. Daghang salamat sa inyong serbisyo sa mga maguuma sa lubi," shared Emelia L. Palatan of Barangay Camambugan, Ubay, Bohol.

Ripples of Knowledge: Nourishing Minds through the Airwaves in the School of Rice Production

REGIONWIDE. School-on-the-Air (SOA) program transcends geographic boundaries and educate a wide range of audiences, including isolated and rural areas, mostly on agriculture. In areas where there may be limited access to traditional educational facilities, this accessibility is essential for promoting knowledge.

By leveraging a variety of media types, including as podcasts, internet platforms, and radio broadcasts, SOA adjusts to the changing landscape of education. Because of this flexibility, students are guaranteed to have access to worthwhile content via channels that best fit their interests and technological capacities.

With this, the Agricultural Training Institute in Central Visayas conducted a SOA under the Coconut Farmers Industry Development Program (CFIDP) held at Tubigon, Talibon & Ubay Radio Stations on August 22, 2023 to September 21, 2023 with 500 total number of coco-farmer graduates.

The activity aimed that the graduates should be able to enhanced their know-how on the curriculum under the SOA for Coconut.

"Ang akong nakat-onan o impression sa atong school on the air, tungod kay daghan kaayo ko ug nakat-onan kabahin sa pagpananom sa lubi, salamat sa nagpasiugda niining school on the air ang ATI, ilabi na sa nga produkto kabahin sa lubi. Para nako nakatabang gyud ang skwelahan sa kahanginan tungod kay ilang gihatag ang mga teknolohiya kong unsaon ang insaktong pagpananom sa lubi. Daghang salamat sa inyong serbisyo sa mga maguuma sa lubi," shared Emelia L. Palatan of Barangay Camambugan, Ubay, Bohol.

Programs under the SOA have the ability to incorporate and maintain indigenous agricultural knowledge and cultural traditions. This integration guarantees that conventional knowledge coexists with contemporary farming methods, encouraging a farming philosophy that is all-encompassing.





Blossoming Horizons: The Art and Magic of Plant Propagation

REGIONWIDE. Plant propagation in agriculture guarantees a steady and reliable crop supply. Plants with beneficial features can be multiplied by farmers, improving the plants' resistance, quality, and yield.

The genetic variety of plant species is preserved in part through plant propagation. Certain genetic features and qualities can be preserved for many generations by propagating plants.

With this, 19 trainees composed of 13 Agricultural Extension Workers (AEWs) and 6 farmers participated the training entitled Making More Plants: The Art, Science and Joy of Plant Propagation Training of Trainers (TOT) on Plant Nursery Establishment, Management and Accreditation for Coconut, Cacao and Coffee held at Pacheco's Inn, Poblacion, Ubay, Bohol on September 11-15, 2023.

The training aimed to capacitate the AEWs, who are able to deliver topics on the various steps, processes, and theories related to Plant Nursery Establishment, Management and Accreditation of coconut, cacao and coffee during the implementation of the farmer level trainings in order to complement the workforce of the Philippine Crop Authority (PCA) in the continuous production, distribution, nursery raising and field planting of planting materials.

"This training helped me to learn new things, especially about coconut and nursery establishment as a whole. It also helped me unlearn things I know from the past that are outdated and not applicable today. I will strive to extend to the farmers in our LGUs this new found knowledge. I hope this kind of training will continue to empower other farmers, private owners and AEWs and truly equip us in cascading the same information for our respective Local Government Unit (LGU)", expressed Kenneth L. Gumapac-HVCDP Technician, LGU Sibulan.

As part of their agreements, two (2) batches of farmer-level training shall be conducted by the TOT graduates on October 3-5, 2023 for Bohol at Ubay, Bohol, and October 10-12, 2023 for Cebu at Tuburan, Cebu, respectively.

In addition, graduates will serve as facilitators and resource speakers during these activities.

Plant propagation can engage communities in gardening, horticulture, and environmental projects. This involvement fosters a sense of connection to nature and promotes sustainable practices.

Cultivating Richness: The power duo of Coconut and Coffee Farming Unveiled

REGIONWIDE. Millions of farmers around the world rely on the cultivation of coconuts and coffee as major sources of income. These crops give farmers and their communities a living and play a significant role in the economies of many tropical locations.

These crops can be grown to enable a variety of agricultural techniques, including agroforestry and intercropping. This encourages the use of sustainable farming practices and increases agroecosystem biodiversity.

In the food and beverage sector, products like coconut and coffee are indispensable. They are found in many different items, such as chocolates, candies, meals made with coconut, and drinks made with coffee.

With this, the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) in Central Visayas conducted a training on Kapehan sa Kalubihan sa Rehiyon Siete: Training on Coconut-Coffee Farming System Batch 2 held at Dauin, Negros Oriental on September 19-21, 2023 with a total of 17 participants composed of seven (7) Agricultural Extension Workers (AEWs), nine (9) farmers, and one ATI staff.

The training aimed to capacitate and/or further enhance the knowledge of the participants on the coconut-coffee farming system.

Moreover, graduates of the training will implement the skills and learnings to their own farms. They would also train their fellow farmers/cooperators. And farmer participants will strengthen their respective cooperative through partnering with other stakeholders for financial and technical support to boost coffee production and processing in the municipality.

"I learned a lot about coffee management and preparation of the seedlings. From the topic on coffee harvesting and post harvesting, where we only pick the fully ripe beans. In sorting, floating coffee seeds were disseminated. In depulping or overnight for fermentation, to washing and drying the coffee that has three ways: sun drying, solar drying and air drying with 12% moisture content. If we apply the techniques and management in coffee farming establishment and field management practices, we can aim for good quality of the coffee," shared Ahga Rebusa a farmer participant from Valencia, Negros Oriental.

Farming of coconuts and coffee has a significant impact on cultural heritage, economic growth, and environmental sustainability. Their production helps to sustain farmers' livelihoods, promotes international trade, and significantly influences the economies and landscapes of many geographical areas.





Empowering Trainers for Corn Cluster Development Excellence

REGIONWIDE. In the Philippines, corn, sometimes known as maize, is a major crop and a staple meal. It is important for nutrition, culture, and the economy and is grown throughout the nation.

Despite being a major corn grower, the Philippines has occasionally imported corn to suit domestic demand, especially when local supplies were insufficient. This highlights the necessity of developing plans to increase domestic output and lessen reliance on imports. Ensuring sustainable corn production is essential for a variety of environmental, economic, and social reasons.

In addition, the need to expose individuals to new knowledge and skills requires training of new trainers. Creating a multiplier effect on the larger agricultural sector, this information transfer is essential to the continuation and sustainability of enhanced corn production practices.

In this regard, the Agricultural Training Institute – Regional Training Center (ATI-RTC) VII conducted the training entitled MAISaCluster Tayo: Training of Trainers on Corn Cluster Development held at ATI-7 Training Complex, Cabawan District, Tagbilaran City, Bohol on July 10-14, 2023.

A total of 20 participants composed of Agricultural Extension Workers (AEWs) and farmers were trained.

Generally, the training aimed to enhance the knowledge and skills of participants on the Corn Cluster Development.

"This training on Corn Cluster Development has given us the knowledge and importance of farm clustering. This training also improved our skills and knowledge in financial management. This improvement and knowledge will be passed on to our different corn clusters in our Local Government Unit (LGU). To increase the income and profit of our corn cluster members they can also be efficient in their cluster. TOT on Corn Cluster Development have a big role to AEWs on Corn for them can assist the cluster members and officers effectively, in making the cluster development plan and to be more well-built and secure," shared Daisy M. Calibo, AEW of LGU-Bayawan City, Negros Oriental.

Reaping Knowledge: Cultivating Expertise in Site-Specific Nutrient

REGIONWIDE. Site-specific nutrient management for cassava is critical for improved crop productivity, healthy soil, and sustainable agriculture. By keeping the soil's nutrient levels at their ideal, site-specific management helps avoid nutrient imbalances, which can cause soil degradation. This helps maintain the fertility of the soil and its general health. Providing site-specific nutrient management training to trainers guarantees that farmers get advice on implementing best practices. Farmers are better equipped to manage nutrients on their cassava fields in a sustainable and efficient manner because of this information transfer.

On August 07-11, 2023, some 22 Agricultural Extension Workers (AEWs) from across the region were trained on "From Corn to Cassava: Training of Trainers on Site Specific Nutrient Management (SSNM)" on Cassava held at ATI-7 Training Complex, Cabawan District, Tagbilaran City, Bohol.

Participants learned the nutrient expert based site-specific nutrient management (SSNM-NE) for cassava production, fertilizer use, yield determination by using crop-cut data, and status of Philippine cassava industry. Moreover, the resource speakers discussed and navigated the nutrient expert tool of cassava which is crucial to the extension service of the agricultural extension workers. The five-day training was applied and accredited by the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) and the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Council for Agriculture.

"In this training of trainers on site specific nutrient management, I learned about the importance of SSNM in providing our cassava farmers the ideal fertilizer rates for their production. I think this training is very helpful in AEWs in facilitating our farmers in terms of fertilizer recommendation to their farm," shared Romeo F. Pique Jr. of LGU-Guihulngan City, Negros Oriental.

Stable and dependable cassava production is enhanced by site-specific management, which raises nutrient levels to ideal levels. Thus, by guaranteeing a steady supply of this staple crop, this also promotes food security.





Revolutionizing Farms: The Rise of Intelligent Solutions in Smart Agriculture Technologies

BILAR, BOHOL. Smart Agriculture Technologies (SATs) play a crucial role in modern-day farming by introducing innovative solutions that enhance efficiency, sustainability, and productivity.

Farmers can now make informed decisions through the analysis of real-time data gathered from sensors, drones, and other smart devices. This data includes information on weather patterns, soil health, crop conditions, and more, enabling farmers to respond promptly to changing conditions and optimize their farming practices.

Thus, a Training on Smart Agriculture Technologies (SATs) – Phase 1: Digital Farmers Program (DFP 101 and 102) for Rice was implemented on July 17-18, 2023 and SATs – Phase 2: Digital Farmers Program (DFP-103 v.1) on July 25-28, 2024 both held at ATI-7 Training Complex, Cabawan District, Tagbilaran City with 20 farmer-youth tandems from Cabacnitan Farmer's Association from Bilar, Bohol.

The activity aimed to enhanced the knowledge and skills of farmers and youths in the Digital Farmers' Program (DFP).

"Nakakat-on ko unsaon paggamit og cellphone og unsaon paggamit sa GPS. Nakakat-on usab ko sa mga agri-apps og unsay mga gamit niini para makatabang namo isip usa ka mag-uuma. Ang among mga nakat-onan, gamiton sa among kabasakan og itudlo ko kini sa akong kaubanang mag-uuma," says Pedro Piquit, one of the farmer-participantss.

With a growing global population, smart agriculture is crucial for meeting the increasing demand for food. By improving productivity and reducing waste, these technologies contribute to global food security challenges.

SATs was implemented with a strong partnership with Bohol's Office of the Provincial Agriculturists and the Municipal Agriculturist of the Local Government Unit of Bilar, Bohol.

ATI-7 concluded SOA-SRA with 2380 graduates

CENTRAL VISAYAS – Two Thousand Three Hundred Eighty (2,380) participants from all over the region completed the School-on-the-Air on Smart Rice Agriculture (SOA-SRA) which was aired over DYHP 612 KHz RMN Cebu and simultaneously mainstreamed at the Agricultural Training Institute-VII (ATI-7) Facebook Official page from July 17, 2023 to September 01, 2023 at 4:00-4:30 AM.

In order to achieve food security and better lives, SOA-SRA seeks to teach and implement climate-smart rice technology among the region's rice farmers. It is also well recognized that radio is a cheap and efficient learning tool. It is acknowledged as the main news source and the most widely used, convincing, and reliable communication medium, especially for vulnerable populations and distant areas, thus the SOA-SRA.

Topics discussed include modules on Rice Tarrification and Liberalization, Climate Change, Climate Smart Agriculture, Financial Risk Mechanism, Technologies on Rice Production to Post-Harvest, and Marketing. Pools of speakers were Felix Tubiano, Science Research Specialist –II (SRS II) of the Department of Agriculture - Bohol Agriculture Promotion Center (DA-BAPC); Jason Care Parina, SRS-I of PhilRice; Christian Owen Vallejos, Team Head/Insurance Underwriter and Melanie Jabel, Acting Insurance Underwriter of Philippines Crop Insurance Corporation; Cecile Opada, SRS II of BAPC; and Reynadez Curayag, Agriculturist I of ATI-7, respectively.

Recognizing the efforts of the enrollees/listeners, ATI-7 chose Top 3 graduates per province based on highest scores from post-test/exams. Winners for the province of Bohol were the following: Ma Fe Buno (Top1); Susan Baga (Top 2) & Luz Evarado (Top 3). For the province of Negros Oriental: Rotilla Alcantara (Top 1); Norma Guevarra (Top 2); Dorie Verbo (Top 3) while from Argao, Cebu: Juvelyn Senining (Top 1); Concepcion Manila (Top 2); Nerissa Binag (Top 3). For Lazi, Siquijor were: Christy Mae Tome (Top 1); Jocelyn Baguis (Top 2); Mila Lalem (Top 3). Each winner was given cellphone and medals as an award. Further, lucky texters also received 100 worth of load and after-training support to all graduates.

Doris Isabel Racho of the ATI-7 Information Section served as the project officer assisted by Shanemie Carelle Pradera who also acted as Anchor with Ms. Jolina Dano of DA- 7 as co-anchor during the 21 Episodes. Limuel Patrick Borbano and Rosmalyn Pusta of ATI-7 also joined as support staff.

The SOA-SRA is a collaboration of the ATI-7 and DA- 7. Partner agencies like PIA, PCIC & PhilRice supported the program. Graduation rites per province were concluded on September 18 at Brgy. Panubigan, Carlaon City; September 20 at Brgy Tulic, Argao, Cebu; September 26 at Ubay Gym, Ubay, Bohol & September 28 at Lazi Social Center, Lazi, Siquijor.

"Daghan ta ug nakat-onan sa atoang pagmata-mata sa kadlawon sa atong School-on-the-Air. Kalipay nato ni mga farmers. Salamat kaninyo mga maam ug sir sa paghatag sa amoa og chance na ma apil ani na programa. Salamat sa atoang mga resource speakers. Amoang e apply og unsa amoang nakat-unan labi na sa palay check system. Hinaot inyong ipadayon ang suporta sa mga mag-uuma. Makasalig mi na naa mi kadoolan mga farmers sa panahon sa mga kakulian. Daghan kaayong salamat." said Rotilla S. Alcantara, one of the SOA-SRA graduates.





Guardians of the Livestock Industry: Fostering Excellence in Animal Health Care and Management

REGIONWIDE. Programs for the health care of animals set up reliable surveillance methods to find and track the existence of Avian Influenza (AI) and African Swine Fever (ASF). Prompt containment measures implementation depends on early discovery.

Strict biosecurity protocols are emphasized in animal health management on farms. To stop the introduction and spread of AI and ASF, this entails instituting hygiene measures, limiting access, and putting in place quarantine procedures.

In this regard, the Agricultural Training Institute in Central Visayas implemented a training on Animal Health Care and Management: Enhancing Competency of Municipal Livestock Coordinators to prevent ASF and AI (Batch 2) held at ATI-RTC 7 Training Complex, Cabawan District, Tagbilaran City, Bohol on August 22-24, 2023.

Programs for teaching animal management and health care spread awareness of AI prevention strategies and ASF. Providing education to farmers, veterinary professionals, and other relevant parties promote awareness, responsible behavior, and prompt reporting of any unexpected symptoms or indicators.

A total of 22 participants composed of 12 Agricultural Extension Workers (AEWs) and 10 farmers joined the activity.

The training aimed to capacitate AEWs on knowledge and skills in animal health and management.

"The best experience being part of this training is that we were able to gain more knowledge and insights from this training. The resource persons were very reliable and credible with respect to their professional fields/expertise. This training also serves as linkages to different LGUs from Bohol and Cebu provinces. We were able to gain connections and at the same time relationship to share experiences and ideas related to Agriculture," said Mr. Mark Salatan, Swine Technician of Mandaue City Public Vendors Multi-Purpose Cooperative (MAVENCO).

Moreover, programs for the management and health of animals highlight the possible zoonotic hazards connected with AI and ASF. These initiatives support animal health, which tangentially benefits human health protection.

LIVESTOCK PROGRAM activities

by shanemie carelle d. pradera

Wings of Knowledge: Raising Expertise in Native Chicken Production

TAGBILARAN CITY, BOHOL. By protecting and promoting native chicken breeds that are suited to their particular ecosystems, native chicken production helps to conserve biodiversity. In chicken farming, this encourages resilience and helps stop genetic degradation.

Compared to commercial varieties, native chickens use less resources and inputs since they are frequently better suited to the local environment. Their capacity to endure environmental hardships and thrive on feeds that are readily available locally is consistent with the ideas of resource-efficient and sustainable agriculture.

In addition, native chicken production opens avenues for education and training programs, empowering farmers with knowledge and skills in poultry management. This educational aspect is vital for sustainable and informed farming practices.

In this regard, 20 farmers from across the province of Bohol were trained on Native Chicken Production and Management BATCH II held at the Agricultural Training Institute- Regional Training Center (ATI-RTC) VII Complex, Cabawan District, Tagbilaran City, Bohol on August 15-17, 2023.

The training aimed for the participants to enhance their knowledge, attitude and skills in Production and Management of Native Chicken.

"Kami mapasalamaton niining ahensiya sa ATI sa pag conduct niining training aron kami maka kuha ug dugang impormasyon, kahibalo sa pagpamuhi og mga manok. Sa tibuok team hapsay kaayo ang training, intact and resourceful ang mga impormasyon nga makahatag og kasibot sa pagpamuhi. Ang venue is hinlo og dako para sa tanan. Ang pagkaon healthy and well balance. Ang katibuk-an sa training is nindot, well prepared, well planned, direct sa goal and labaw sa tanan dakong tabang ka namo tanan," expressed Rosita J. Miasco, Supervising Agriculturist – Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA), Bohol.

Producing chickens domestically creates opportunities for educational and training initiatives, equipping farmers with the know-how and abilities to manage chickens. This educational component is essential for educated and sustainable farming operations.



LEARNING SITE updates



ATI certifies 4 Learning Sites in the region

CENTRAL VISAYAS – The Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) has certified additional four (4) Learning Sites for Agriculture (LSA) in the region for the third quarter of 2023.

The following farms are the newly certified LSAs. For Bohol, Felban's Farm at Brgy. Guadalupe, Carmen with Paulito A. Malaron as farm co-operator was certified.

For Cebu, these are Los Hermanos Farm based at Purok Sambag, Pinamungahan with Regelito F. Gierran as the farm co-operator and Lamac MPC-Cocohub located at Colonia, Tuburan with Jesson T. Tamundoc as the farm co-operator.

For Negros Oriental, is Armstrong Farmstead (Jalbuna Family) based at Brgy. Tabuan, Bayawan City with Remedios J. Bolingot as the farm co-operator.

The Learning Site for Agriculture (LSA) is a farm that employs workable



farming techniques, practices appropriate agricultural technologies, and runs successfully as a result. Comparatively speaking to the other farmers, the farmer/ farm family owner is quite advanced.

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aticv.7@gmail.com
ati_7cv@yahoo.com



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Agricultural Training Institute-Region 7 (ATI-R7)

Cabawan District, Tagbilaran City, Bohol 6300

www.ati.da.gov.ph/ati-7 | aticv.7@gmail.com

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