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Ricetravaganza



ROARS GOES TO
SOUTHERN LEYTE

SOA ON SMART RICE
AGRICULTURE

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Feature



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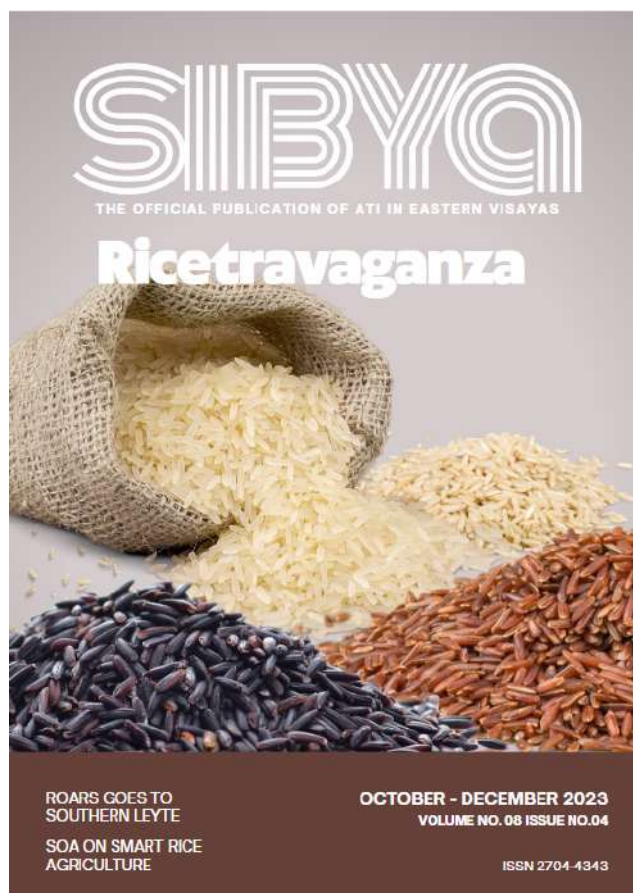
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Kabataang OA Quiz Bee is back in its 2nd year

Organic Agriculture Month is celebrated every November per Presidential Proclamation No. 1030, s. 2015. This aims “to promote the industrialization and full employment of Filipinos based on sound agricultural development.” This also supports further adoption of organic agriculture practices in the country.



On its part, the Agricultural Training Institute – Regional Training Center 8 conducts various trainings, seminars, and technical briefings, for farmers and the youth. In 2019, ATI-RTC 8 began the Search for Kabataang OA wherein the winner represented and won 3rd Place at the National Level. However, the activity took a back seat during the pandemic. This year, a new set of students vied for the Regional Kabataang OA Quiz Bee to represent at the National Level.

Agriculture schools actively join

Eighteen students from six state universities in the region including Samar State University, Eastern Visayas State University, Northern Samar State University, Southern Leyte State University, Visayas State University, and Biliran Province State University competed in the Regional Kabataang OA Quiz Bee 2023 on November 6, 2023 at ATI-RTC 8, Baybay City, Leyte.



Three college students from every university, enrolled in an agriculture-related course, showed their proficiency in Organic Agriculture. The quiz bee had three levels: easy, moderate, and difficult rounds. The top five students were recognized: Mr. Joshua P. Zartiga (1st Place, VSU), Mr. Pedro S. Aculan (VSU, 2nd Place), Ms. Dawn Erica Pogoy (3rd Place, SLSU), Ms. Irish Monares (4th Place, NWSSU), and Mr. Charles A. Tubera (5th Place, ESSU). The top five students also received certificates of recognition and cash awards.



Competing at the Nationals

Among the group, Mr. Joshua Zartiga, a BS in Agriculture student, represented Eastern Visayas at the 2nd National Kabataang OA Quiz Bee on November 22, 2023 at ATI Central Office, Diliman, Quezon City.

Thirteen other college students from state universities and colleges in the country competed in the quiz bee. Although the coverage for the topics was broad, this did not waver Mr. Zartiga’s determination to take the opportunity as a means for learning and experience.

“It’s also a challenge to find reliable reading materials on the internet because you don’t know if you’re searching for the right topic. Before the competition, I tried to read the coverage given for the quiz bee. Syempre masaya kahit may pressure. I’m also thankful to my coach Doc Tin for helping me with the review,” he says. With a good turnout of university and student participation, ATI-RTC 8 OA focal person, Ms. Graciela V. Gacutan, is more ecstatic to involve the youth sector in raising organic agriculture awareness. She takes it as an optimistic step and an indication that students are interested in understanding more about organic agriculture. Aside from this annual celebration, Ms. Gacutan also highlights that internship programs are available for youth who need equal support to ensure success in their proposed OA enterprise.





I gained valuable insights into the significance of rice and acquired the knowledge to become a responsible consumer, I won't forget the ABKD.

November brings a good variety of programs in celebration of National Rice Awareness Month (NRAM) at ATI-RTC 8. It is also one of the most awaited months for the clients within proximity of the Center as this brings forth not just regular training and seminars, but truly unique activities and games that tickle the competitive spirit and curious mind.

100 participants graced the event on November 16, 2023 at ATI-RTC 8, VSU Campus, Baybay City, Leyte.

Ricetravaganza

Everything Nice about
Colored Rice



Select VSU college and high school students were treated to a fun afternoon of learning and games, from appreciating each grain on “Counting Rice Grains” to reciting the “Be RicePossible Pledge”.

Ms. Jeneva Pestera shares, “I am grateful for the wonderful opportunity to participate in this engaging activity. Through my involvement, I gained valuable insights into the significance of rice and acquired the knowledge to become a responsible consumer, I won’t forget the ABKD. “

Mr. Benjamin Lagaday also presented his topic on agri-apps. These are efficient tools that can help a farmer make informed decisions. Mr. Lagaday encouraged the students to share this knowledge with more farmers in their communities.



As a regular celebration, NRAM is an equally exciting occasion at ATI-RTC 8 which provides innovative and excellent service every year.

NRAM focal person, Ms. Melinda P. Petalcorin, brought in a colorful discussion through “Ricetravaganza: Everything nice about Colored Rice”. The activity aims to promote rice awareness and being RicePossible among stakeholders. Specifically, it intends to focus on an information campaign for colored rice considering that most students, faculty, and staff on campus only consume white rice. Mr. Edson Penasbo of PhilRice-Bicol, a Resource Person on colored rice (varieties and nutritional value), gladly answered queries from the participants for the one-day event.





ROARS goes to Southern Leyte

Rice and Organic Agriculture Awareness Reach Schools (ROARS) is one of the institutionalized programs at ATI-RTC 8. This aims to encourage students, specifically at the Elementary Level, to learn the concept of organic agriculture and the importance of rice at an early age.

Since it started, ROARS has visited numerous schools in the region to keep the information drive be more accessible to students. On November 20, 2023, students and teachers at San Juan Central Elementary School in San Juan, Southern Leyte enthusiastically participated in the activity.

Ms. Melinda P. Petalcorin, Chief of ATI-RTC 8 IS, shed light on the nutritional value of rice and emphasized the ABKD. Consequently, students eagerly contributed to the games and recited the Be RicePonsible pledge.

Meanwhile, Ms. Graciela Gacutan emphasized the need for people to be conscious of the food they consume, whether it is organic or chemically produced. She stressed the importance of ensuring that our food is safe for our bodies.

Additionally, Ms. Gacutan highlighted the significance of nurturing the soil in organic practices. She emphasized, "It's not just about what we eat, but also about caring for the environment and promoting sustainable agricultural practices." The activity also paved the way for ATI-RTC 8 to provide technical advice on organic agriculture practice since the school maintains a Gulayan sa Paaralan.



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The SOA-Smart Rice Agriculture: Palay Aralan Makabagong Pagsasaka sa Himpapawid started in July 2023 and ran until September 2023. It aimed to empower farmers to become more competitive in modern rice farming techniques using radio and social media platforms. ATI-RTC 8 served as the overall coordinator of the program in collaboration with Department of Agriculture-Regional Field Office 8, the Provincial Office of Northern Samar, Provincial Officer of Southern Leyte, and its municipalities.

SOA on Smart Rice Agriculture

A total of 2, 243 farmer-enrollees graduated in the 3-month School on-the-Air on Smart Rice Agriculture (SOA-SRA) in a Virtual Mass Graduation ceremony held on November 10, 2023.

This year’s overall top graduate hails from Bontoc, Southern Leyte. Mr. Alfredo B. Dolojan, through a video message, expressed his gratefulness for the people and agencies who worked together for the success of the SOA. “It was a dream for me to be a very productive rice farmer. That is why I try my best to attend activities and educate myself about anything related to rice farming to alleviate our family’s way of living.” He emphasized his learnings on different topics such as the PalayCheck system, from seed selection up to post-harvesting, and other smart agriculture technologies. He hopes that more training and related activities will be given to farmers in the future to increase their knowledge and apply these in their practices.

Here is the list of the Overall Top 5 graduates of this year’s Palay Aralan:

1. Alfredo B. Dolojan – Bontoc, Southern Leyte
2. Velma F. Salgado – Allen, Northern Samar
3. Cristita B. Cabarubias – Malitbog, Southern Leyte
4. Ligenard Estorba – Saint Bernard, Southern Leyte
5. Rio Bitangga – Macrohon, Southern Leyte

Information Services Section Chief, Ms. Melinda Petalcorin, congratulated the participants for completing the program as well as the facilitators who have exerted their efforts in contributing to its successful implementation. “Here at ATI, we really hope that a positive change will happen to the lives of our farmer graduates after the SOA”, she shared during her message. She added that the success of the activity not only lies in having funds for different programs or in the improvement of the courses or modules for the SOA. “The success of the activity lies in the thirst for knowledge of our farmers, the support from our LGUs, and the services given by the facilitators.”

The SOA-SRA aired over DYSM Catarman, Radyo Pilipinas Sogod, and DYDM Maasin.



ALFREDO B. DOLOJAN
SCRENGRAB FROM SOA SRA GRADUATION

“ Kaya ako sumali sa SOA para madagdagan ang aking kaalaman sa pagsasaka at lumago ang aking pagpanguma sa palay. Andami kong natututunan lalo na sa Palaycheck System. Kaming lahat na mga rice farmers, saludo sa ATI. ”





ATI-RTC 8 STAFFS SHINE ON EXCEL DAY

The year filled ATI-RTC 8 with numerous things to be grateful for. Partnerships continued while new ones were established to provide excellent extension services to clients in the region. As 2023 closes, the Center makes it a point to also acknowledge the efforts of the staff that did not wane even with the overwhelming targets to accomplish.

ATI-RTC 8 celebrates with the theme, “Let’s SHINE (Sharing Inspiration for Noteworthy agri-Extension)” on December 15, 2023 to celebrate the season and the learnings of the past year.

PANATA Awards

Inspired by the Panunumpa sa Kawani ng Gobyerno, the Center recognizes the staff for their contribution. And the PANATA awards for 2023 goes to...

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Backpacker | – Oshielah N. Bandalan |
| Bloomer | – Fe Rovelyn H. Ruales |
| Cliff Jumper | – Maria Rica Jea G. Lobina |
| Tide Turner (Creative) | – Benjamin B. Lagaday III |
| Decoder | – Michael P. Buzon |
| Equalizer | – Aiza A. Madum |
| Face Lifter | – Junalyn F. Palco |
| Tide Turner (Innovative) | – Christian Keruel Y. Laurente |
| Light Breaker | – Lovely G. Terol |
| Mission Possible | – Jemboy G. Gonzaga |
| Mountain Mover | – Gizell Jill D. Nunez |
| Scrapper | – Arjie S. Gloria |



The fourth awardee for the Management’s Choice is Ms. Maria Rica Jea G. Lobina, Project Evaluation Officer I from the Planning and Monitoring Evaluation Unit. The Management’s Choice Award is annually given to an exemplary employee selected by the ATI-RTC 8 management. In her acceptance speech, Ms. Lobina notes, “I’m honored to be recognized as a person who has made a positive impact in the office. I will forever be grateful to ATI and to the management for a very rare opportunity such as this.”

As the Center greatly appreciates the contribution of its partners, it is equally thankful to the staff for unselfishly dedicating their time, hard work, and diligence in performing their responsibilities.

In her message, Center Director Hazel Grace T. Taganas hopes that the celebration will be a reminder to continue the shine throughout the year. “So I hope, as we celebrate Christmas, we remember who is the reason for our celebration. I hope it’s not just during Christmas that we will shine, not literally wear glimmering clothes, but also throughout as we work here. Christ is telling us to let our light shine. So as trainers, when we influence others, we hope, it is our hope, it is our prayer, that each one of us continue to shine. Let’s shine the light that is entrusted to us by God, and we hope that we can always be a blessing to others. So, whenever you remember the word SHINE, Sharing Inspiration for

Let’s shine the light that is entrusted to us by God, and we hope that we can always be a blessing to others.

In Noteworthy agriExtension, it’s not just up to this day when we are celebrating it but throughout our stay, throughout our lives that we always be a blessing to others”, she shares.

The Center is keen not only to create a culture of well-grounded employees but also to acknowledge a job well done for a more productive and motivated workplace. As Phil Jackson says, “The strength of the team is each member. The strength of each member is the team”.





Agri Dreams from a Father's Legacy

For most daughters, their fathers are the wisest men in the world. As Ms. Leonila Troyo Cajés have followed in her father's footsteps, it is a testament to her belief in her father's legacy.

A Daughter's Inspiration

The farm was realized by Ms. Leonila Troyo Cajés' tireless dedication and vision, carrying forward her father's legacy in agriculture while enriching the community with modern agricultural knowledge and training. Even at 59 years old, Ms. Cajés is high-spirited to venture into farming as she shares, "Maybe it is a bit late in my age, but I realized that I could be a farmer, and I'm inspired by my father because he was also a farmer awardee back then in ViSCA, and all of us, his children were sent to school and have now become professionals."

Ms. Cajés attended a training on Tilapia farming initiated by the City Government of Baybay. Soon right after, she started tilapia production. Tilapia farming is one of the programs of Mayor Jose Carlos Cari to sustain the local fish supply in the area and help farmers earn additional income. Ms. Cajés restored the old pond of her late father and raised tilapia fingerlings provided by the LGU - Baybay.

“
Maybe it is a bit late in my age, but I realized that I could be a farmer, and I'm inspired by my father because he was also a farmer awardee back then
”

The farm saw potential in tilapia farming after earning around 25,000 pesos on its first harvest.

Upon the prodding of retired Baybay City Agriculturist, Ms. Ellen Siddiqui, Ms. Cajés sought to apply as Learning Site for Agriculture with ATI RTC 8.

Chandria Integrated Farm became one of ATI's learning sites for agriculture (LSA) under the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) program. The farm is a three-hectare fertile land in Barangay

Gacat, Baybay City, Leyte. It is actively implementing sustainable practices based on an integrated diversified farming system which has components on rice, vegetables, tilapia, and livestock. Later, the farm also became a TESDA Farm School.

The farm is maintained by three (3) farm laborers: one for livestock and two for vegetables. The farm school has four (4) staff to handle administrative tasks and training services.

Tech in practice

In terms of vegetable production, Chandria followed good agricultural practices (GAP) ensuring food safety. It produces its own nutrient solution for lettuce hydroponics and applies minimal synthetic fertilizers to the vegetables under protected cultivation. Likewise, the farm also efficiently utilizes its vegetable peels and scraped portions as supplemental feed for its domesticated animals, reducing wastes and its need for commercial feed. The farm directly distributes its harvest to the LGU's Kadiwa program. Mr. Petrolino Flandez, one of the farm staff, mentioned that, "Before, we were difficulty in marketing our products, but through the Kadiwa, we have a stable market for our produce, making it easier to connect with local consumers".

Apart from tilling the land and rearing crops, the farm pursues to share its agricultural practices and technologies with fellow farmers. Chandria Integrated Farm applied for Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) accreditation offering Training Courses for Technical and Vocational Education (TVET) particularly on Organic Agriculture Production NC II, Agricultural Crops Production NC II, Rice Machinery Operations NC II, and Production of High Inbred Rice, and Seed Certification, and Farm Mechanization. Since 2021, the farm has produced hundreds of skilled graduates and most of them were employed already in the agriculture industry.

According to Ms. Cajés, there are times when problems emerge on the farm. Like other farms cooperators, they also feel the struggle with the rising prices of farm inputs. To make up for the expenses incurred, they make sure that production can keep up. She also mentioned that there were times before when they would make mistakes in the planting of certain crops which has now been improved as they learned to schedule planting of crops for whichever is in demand during a particular season.

A Stronger Legacy

Developments in the farm are far from over. Ms. Cajés, with her political stature as Barangay chairperson, is also an enabling role that guide and encourage the farmers in the community to embrace modern agricultural practices. It molds Chandria Integrated Farm to become more than a place of cultivation but a source of inspiration and a great source of income for the community.



Ms. Cajés shares, "There is money in farming. People will not realize this unless they venture into farming. They must be willing to go hands-on and focus." She added that some people are afraid to try farming because they do not have the finances to start. She suggests that people must ask for help from the local government as there are projects that can help them.

Working on her father's legacy, Ms. Cajés saw that it has benefited not just their family but also the community. While she is actively serving her community as barangay captain, she is also steadily managing the farm. Politics and agriculture, when the plans and purposes align, can indeed make a significant difference.





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