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ATI-RTC 8 Celebrates 37 Years with

LEGACY & LAURELS

ATING PALARO: MORE THAN GAMES,
BUILDING BONDS AT ATI-RTC 8

PURPLE FRIDAYS FOR A
PURPOSE

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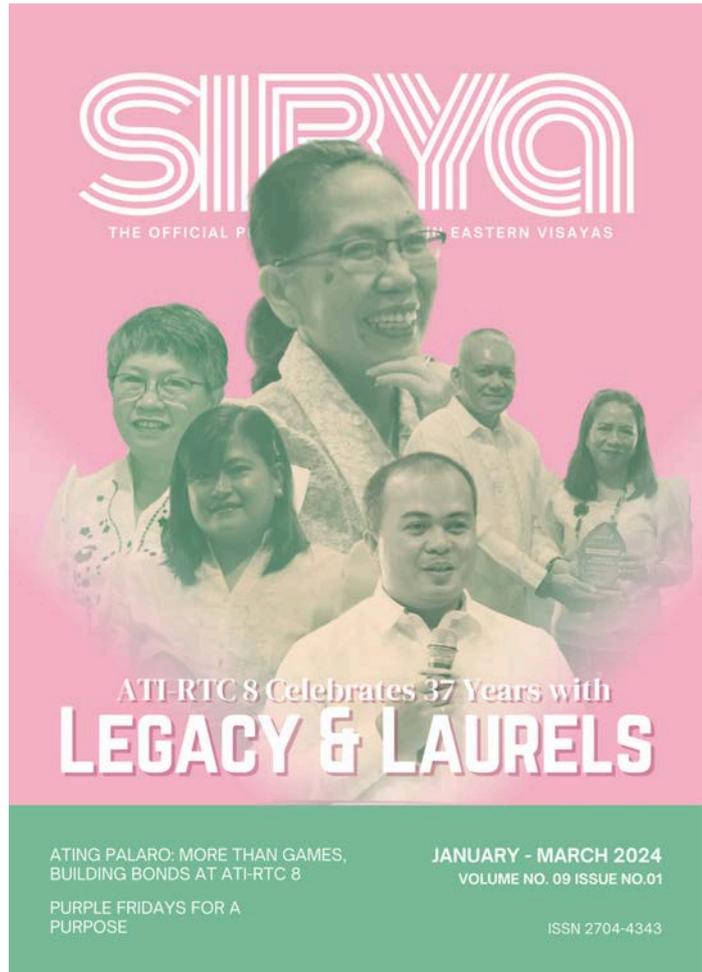
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ATIng Palaro: More Than Games, Building Bonds at ATI-RTC 8



The Agricultural Training Institute - Regional Training Center 8 (ATI-RTC 8) in Baybay City, Leyte, ushered in its 37th anniversary with a unique initiative - "ATIng Palaro" (Employee Games). Held in January 2024, this sporting event transcended the realm of competition, transforming into a strategic move to foster a more vibrant and collaborative workplace culture within the institute.

More Than Just Games: A Recipe for a Positive Work Environment

"ATIng Palaro" wasn't just about winning or losing. It was about injecting a dose of fun and healthy competition into the workday. Spanning two weeks, the games offered a variety of options for staff to participate in, including badminton, table tennis, volleyball, scrabble, word factory, chess, and sungka. These events, strategically scheduled during the Center's "hataw" hour (4-5 PM), seamlessly blended physical activity and team bonding into the daily routine.

ATI-RTC 8's Center Director Hazel Grace Taganas officially opened the games, expressing her enthusiasm for "ATIng Palaro." She highlighted the event's aim to encourage staff to become more active, explore new sports, and strengthen camaraderie. Her message encouraged everyone to participate, fostering a spirit of inclusivity and setting the tone for a positive and enjoyable experience throughout the entire event.





More Than Just Games: A Recipe for a Positive Work Environment

The competition kicked off with four teams, each a mix of staff members from all sections. The "Pink Crackers" dominated in Boggle, Scrabble, Table Tennis, and Volleyball, while the "Green Team" conquered Chess, Sungka, and Badminton. The "Yellow Team" and "Blue Team" also displayed their competitive spirit and sportsmanship throughout the various events.

Professor Flor Gatchalian of the Institute of Human Kinetics at Visayas State University (VSU) served as the overall coordinator for the team games, ensuring a smooth and fair competition.

Beyond the Scoreboards

"The best part of the recently concluded ATIng Palaro is not about the trophy; it's about the bonds we formed, the challenges we overcame, and especially the fun we had," shared Ms. Vanissa Asis, General Athletic Manager of the Overall Champion team, "Pink Crackers." Her words echoed the true essence of "ATIng Palaro" – a celebration that transcended winning or losing. It was about building camaraderie, resilience, and a sense of shared purpose among the staff.

Mr. Bethel John Sinon, chair of the Learning and Development Committee, observed how "ATIng Palaro" brought out the best in the staff. He witnessed moments of joy, determination, and camaraderie, even amidst playful competition. "Player or non-player, may we apply our learnings, not only in the games but also as we move forward as a team here at ATI-RTC 8," he shared. Mr. Sinon emphasized the importance of unity, fun, rest, and valuing people – principles that resonate not only on the court but also within the larger ATI-RTC 8 family.





Celebrating Success: On and Off the Court

Winners were announced on February 7, 2024, as part of the closing festivities for the Center's month-long anniversary celebration. "ATInG Palaro" served as a testament to ATI-RTC 8's commitment to its staff's well-being, fostering a workplace environment that values teamwork, sportsmanship, and a healthy dose of fun. The success of the event paves the way for future initiatives that promote staff engagement and a positive work-life balance within the institute.

by BJLSinon, JGSaulan



Purple Fridays for a Purpose

Throughout March, ATI-RTC 8 staff embraced the #PurpleFridays campaign. Every Friday, employees are encouraged to wear purple, a symbolic color associated with women's empowerment and gender equality. This simple act serves as a visual reminder of the ongoing fight for a more equitable society.

"GADllery of Thoughts": Inspiring Words from the Community

The institute's Gender and Development (GAD) committee launched a unique initiative called the "GADllery of Thoughts." This interactive display posed a thought-provoking question: "What is an empowered woman?" Staff and stakeholders were invited to contribute their answers, which were then showcased on the Wall of Innovations for everyone to read and share. The "GADllery" fosters dialogue and reflection on the essence of women's empowerment, encouraging diverse perspectives within the ATI-RTC 8 community.





We for Gender Equality

A Month Full of Activities

The official opening ceremony for National Women's Month at ATI-RTC 8 took place on March 1, 2024, during the flag retreat ceremony. With a significant portion of the staff in attendance, the ceremony marked a strong start to a month focused on celebrating women's achievements and paving the way for a more inclusive future.

Ms. Mary Jane P. Pepe, ATI-RTC 8's GAD focal, announced a calendar packed with activities. These initiatives extend beyond the institute's walls and engage both the staff and its stakeholders, further amplifying the message of gender equality.

Notably, the Symposium for Women took place on March 12, 2024, providing a platform for discussions and potentially sparking positive change among women and members of the community. Rural Improvement Clubs in the region also participated in the agri-trade fair at the Center.

ATI-RTC 8's commitment to National Women's Month exemplifies the spirit of "WE for gender equality." Their efforts serve as an inspiration for other organizations and individuals to take action and play their part in creating a society where everyone thrives.



RCEF Gears Up for 2024 with Inter-agency Meeting

The Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) has entered its sixth year, and the fight for improved rice production in the Philippines continues. As a key player in the RCEF Extension Services Program (RCEF-RESP), the Agricultural Training Institute - Regional Training Center 8 (ATI-RTC 8) took the initiative to ensure a smooth and impactful year ahead.

On February 21, 2024, an inter-agency meeting and planning session was held at the 4H-Hub in Candahug, Palo, Leyte. This crucial gathering brought together representatives from various organizations:

- Agricultural Training Institute (ATI)
- Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) - Regional and Provincial Offices across Biliran, Leyte, Samar, and Southern Leyte
- Department of Agriculture Regional Field Office 8 (DA-RFO 8)
- Bureau of Plant Industry National Seed Quality Control Services 8 (BPI-NSQCS 8)
- Office of the Provincial Agriculture (OPA) in Leyte, Biliran, and Samar
- Pagsasama ng mga Samahang Magsasaka (PagSo) - Southern Leyte



- National Irrigation Administration (NIA)
- Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation (PCIC)
- National Food Authority (NFA)
- Land Bank of the Philippines Lending Centers in Samar, Southern Leyte, and Leyte
- Philippine Rice Research Institute - Bicol (PhilRice-Bicol) (participating virtually)

A Collaborative Approach for Effective Implementation

The meeting served as a platform for open communication and strategic planning. Discussions revolved around program updates for the 2024 Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund, proposed activities for the upcoming year, challenges faced by the program, and potential solutions.

Representatives from ATI, PhilRice, and TESDA presented their achievements in 2023, highlighted existing hurdles, and outlined their strategies and plans for the coming year.

Reaching Resolute Agreements

It proved to be a productive forum as participating organizations reached firm agreements, paving the way for a more collaborative and efficient approach to achieving the goals of RCEF-RESP in 2024. By fostering stronger connections and aligning efforts, the involved agencies aim to deliver more impactful rice extension services to Filipino rice farmers, ultimately contributing to increased competitiveness and improved livelihoods within the agricultural sector.

ATI-RTC 8 Celebrates 37 Years with "Legacy and Laurels"

The Agricultural Training Institute - Regional Training Center 8 (ATI-RTC 8) in Baybay City, Leyte, marked its 37th anniversary with a momentous event titled "Legacy and Laurels" on February 7, 2024. This celebration wasn't just about milestones; it was a heartfelt recognition of the Center's partners and a dedicated staff member on the cusp of retirement.

Celebrating Outstanding Contributions

The event's highlight was the recognition of individuals and organizations who played a pivotal role in delivering exceptional extension services throughout Region 8 in 2023. These awards acknowledged the impact and dedication behind agricultural development efforts.

- Ms. Berlin Espenido, from Saint Bernard, Southern Leyte, was honored as the Best Agricultural Extension Worker for Rice. Her expertise and commitment to rice production practices were duly recognized.
- Mr. Joper C. Conarco, of Gandara, Samar, received the award for Best Agricultural Extension Worker under the National Urban Peri-urban Agriculture Program. His significant contributions to urban agriculture initiatives were celebrated.
- The Local Government Unit of Saint Bernard, represented by Ms. Erma Capilitan, Municipal Agriculturist, was named the Best LGU Partner. Their unwavering support and collaborative spirit in advancing agricultural development were acknowledged.

- Greenhand Integrated Farm, with farm owners Mr. and Mrs. Nilo Cabantac, was recognized as the Best Learning Site for Agriculture Partner for 2023. Their role in providing a valuable learning environment for agricultural initiatives was commended.

A Fond Farewell and Words of Appreciation

"Legacy and Laurels" was about acknowledging achievements and honoring dedicated service. Ms. Ermalinda Cayago, ATI-RTC 8's Media Production Specialist, was recognized for her 33 years of government service as she prepares for retirement in March 2024. Dr. Vilma M. Patindol, former ATI-RTC 8 Center Director, graced the occasion with her presence and shared words of appreciation and encouragement for Ms. Cayago's journey.

A Celebration Shared Virtually

The "Legacy and Laurels" event wasn't confined to the walls of the institute. It was streamed live via ATI in Eastern Visayas' Facebook page, allowing clients and partners to participate virtually. The online platform was flooded with greetings and well wishes, showcasing the wider community's support for ATI-RTC 8's mission.

"Legacy and Laurels" served as a testament to the institute's 37 years of dedication to agricultural development in the region. It highlighted the importance of collaboration, recognized outstanding contributions, and celebrated the spirit of service.

by BJLSinon



Eastern Visayas Farmers Take Charge: Ensuring Organic Integrity Through PGS

Local farmer groups in Eastern Visayas are taking a proactive step towards securing a brighter future for organic agriculture in the region. By undergoing a comprehensive 10-day training on Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS), they are empowering themselves to ensure the quality and integrity of their organic produce.

What is PGS?

In a nutshell, the Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) are quality assurance initiatives that follow the production-to-consumption approach in guaranteeing the integrity and quality of organic products. It is widely used and accepted as a quality assurance system in the organic agriculture sector, wherein farmers provide direct assurance to consumers regarding the integrity of the product.



The Training Program

The 10-day training program, held at the ATI-RTC 8 in Baybay City, aimed to equip participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to establish and operate their own PGS groups. The curriculum covered a wide range of topics, including:

- Organic Agriculture Act, its amendments, and the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR)
- Organic Agriculture Standards and the National List of Permitted Substances for Organic Agriculture. The nuts and bolts of establishing and operating a PGS group.
- Establishment and Operation of Participatory Guarantee System (PGS)
- Accreditation of Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) Groups as Organic Certifying Bodies
- Peer Review and Certification Protocols

The training wasn't just about lectures; it provided practical application as well. Participants drafted localized Internal Standards and Manuals of Operation, and even conducted mock peer reviews to solidify their understanding.

Motivations and Aspirations

Two farmer groups, Oquendo Rizal Sinidman Dinagan Mawacat Cooperative (ORSIDMA) and Daram Organic Farmers Federation (DOFFED), participated in the first batch of the training. Their motivations for pursuing PGS certification were as diverse as their visions for the future.

ORSIDMA seeks to establish a local organic certifying body that caters to the specific needs of their community. They envision offering affordable certification options and tackling challenges like recordkeeping and a lack of proper facilities. Their long-term goals

include overcoming these hurdles, promoting organic agriculture within their local government unit, and establishing a dedicated store for organic products within five years.

DOFFED, on the other hand, is driven by a desire to champion organic farming practices, offer public services related to organic agriculture, and address issues such as limited access to organic inputs, knowledge gaps about PGS, and misconceptions surrounding organic products. Their vision paints a picture of a thriving organic farming community, a sustainable organic market facilitated by their trading post, and a robust PGS group leading the charge in certifying its members.

Looking Forward: Advocates, Entrepreneurs, and Knowledge Sharers

The PGS training program wasn't just about acquiring knowledge; it was about igniting a passion. Both ORSIDMA and DOFFED emerged from the training empowered not only to establish their own PGS groups but also to become champions for organic agriculture in their communities. They see themselves as future advocates, entrepreneurs of organic products, and knowledge-sharing entities committed to empowering others through farmer-to-farmer training initiatives.

The Eastern Visayas agricultural landscape is poised for a positive transformation, thanks to the dedication and initiative of these local farmer groups. By embracing the Participatory Guarantee System, they are taking control of their future, ensuring the integrity of their organic produce, and paving the way for a more sustainable agricultural ecosystem in the region.

by CKYLaurent

Corn training aims to boost production in Eastern Visayas

Corn, a cornerstone of the Philippines' agricultural landscape, is in focus with a comprehensive training initiative that aims to boost production across Eastern Visayas. The Agricultural Training Institute-Regional Training Center 8 (ATI-RTC 8) spearheaded the "Training of Trainers on Corn Production and Management," held from March 4 to 13, 2024, in Baybay City, Leyte.

Equipping the Experts: A Spectrum of Modern Techniques

This intensive program drew in 31 agricultural extension workers and farmer leaders from 16 key corn-producing municipalities in the region. These participants were equipped with a diverse range of knowledge and skills essential for success in modern corn farming. The curriculum covered a wide array of topics, ensuring a well-rounded understanding of best practices:

- **Digital Agriculture:** Participants explored the exciting world of digital tools and technologies in agriculture. Learning how to leverage e-learning courses kept them abreast of cutting-edge advancements, ensuring they can effectively share this knowledge with farmers.
- **Precision Pest and Disease Management:** Innovative mobile applications like SPIDTECH were introduced, empowering participants to identify and combat crop threats swiftly and efficiently.
- **Optimizing Yields:** The training delved into the crucial role of agro-ecosystem analysis. By understanding the complex interplay of factors within the farming environment, participants gained insights into maximizing corn yields.

From Seed to Shelf: A Holistic Approach

The training program extended beyond cultivation techniques, encompassing crucial post-harvest practices, food processing methods, and marketing strategies. This holistic approach ensures that participating farmers are equipped to grow bountiful harvests and manage them effectively. Value addition

allowed participants to explore various avenues for transforming corn harvests into value-added products. Corn is processed into products like corn juice, patties, and macaroons empowers farmers to diversify their income streams.

Similarly, effective management through dialogue with local associations, allowed participants to gain valuable insights into the best practices for managing agricultural endeavors.

Building a Brighter Future: Empowering Farmers Through Knowledge Sharing



The knowledge and skills gained during this training program are poised to have a ripple effect throughout Eastern Visayas. Looking ahead, the initiative aims to propagate this valuable information through the establishment of 15 Farmer's Field Schools (FFS) across selected local government units. These FFS, scheduled to run from April to September 2024, will serve as platforms for knowledge sharing and capacity building within farming communities.

By empowering agricultural extension workers and farmer leaders with the latest advancements in corn production and management, the ATI-RTC 8 initiative promises to unlock a new era of agricultural prosperity in Eastern Visayas. The region's corn farmers are now equipped with the tools and knowledge they need to not only increase yields but also explore new market opportunities, ultimately contributing to a more robust and sustainable agricultural sector.

by BJLSinon

CocoFBS takes root in Eastern Visayas

The coconut industry in Eastern Visayas is poised for a positive transformation with the launch of the Coconut Farm Business School (CFBS) program. This comprehensive training initiative aims to equip coconut farmers with the knowledge and skills necessary to run their farms as successful businesses, fostering sustainable practices and boosting overall productivity.

Equipping Farmers for Success

The Agricultural Training Institute – Regional Training Center 8 (ATI-RTC 8) held a crucial orientation session on January 31, 2024, in Baybay City, Leyte. This one-day program targeted graduates of the Coconut Farm Business School Training of Trainers, Learning Site cooperators/owners, and local government unit representatives from Southern Leyte, Tabango (Leyte), and Basey (Samar). These individuals will play a critical role in the program's success by serving as facilitators and resource persons.

The orientation session focused on equipping the trainers with the necessary tools for effective program delivery. Key topics included:

- Roles and Responsibilities: Clarifying the specific duties of facilitators, trainers, and other stakeholders within the program.
- Program Schedule: Providing a clear roadmap outlining the training activities throughout the year.
- Reporting and Documentation: Ensuring proper record-keeping and efficient reporting procedures.
- Procurement: Streamlining the process for acquiring resources required for the program.

Collaboration is Key

Ms. Vanessa L. Asis, Project Officer, led the discussion on CFBS guidelines, establishing clear expectations and ensuring everyone was on the same page.



Creating a strong Training Management Team was a primary focus, bringing together representatives from partner local government units, trained agricultural extension workers, and Learning Site owners who will provide valuable practical insights to the farmers.

Further collaboration was fostered through an open forum and planning workshop. Facilitators actively raised concerns, offered suggestions, and brainstormed strategies for a successful program. The importance of utilizing local dialects during training was emphasized to ensure clear communication and maximize learning for all participants.

Looking Forward: Sustainable Practices and Economic Growth

The Coconut Farm Business School holds immense promise for the future of the coconut industry in Eastern Visayas. Ms. Concepcion B. Miro, ATI-RTC8 CFIDP Focal Point Person, shared valuable insights on the program's long-term vision, highlighting its potential to transform lives and economies within the region.

Beyond the knowledge and skills gained, the CFBS program fosters a sense of community and collective progress. With empowered farmers at the helm, the program paves the way for sustainable coconut farming practices, improved productivity, and a brighter economic future for the region. The excitement and dedication of the facilitators are contagious, promising a dynamic learning environment that will empower coconut farmers and contribute to the overall growth of the industry. *by BBLagadayIII*



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