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Showcasing First Fruits of Farm and Fisheries Consolidation Approach In Northern and Central Luzon: **CAR Hosts 2022 F2C2 Luzon A Cluster Summit**



Contents

- 3** Showcasing First Fruits of Farm and Fisheries Consolidation Approach in Northern and Central Luzon: CAR Host 2022 F2C2 Luzon A Cluster Summit
- 8** Looking through the Grassroots View: ATI-RTC-CAR Focuses AFE-RBME Lens on 2019 Extension Interventions
- 10** CBF Stakeholders Convene for Japan-MAFF Funded Project Implementation
- 12** ATI-RTC-CAR Hosts DA's Dialogue with Benguet's Vegetable Industry Stakeholders on Vegetable Smuggling
- 15** Showcasing the Uniqueness of Cordilleran Organic La Trinidad's Cosmic Farm Hosts DA ASec Lasiste and Team
- 20** Kalinga, Ifugao Rice Clusters Venture Towards Value-Adding
- 22** Multiplying Knowledge Through Farm Schools: The Jacob's LSA Story

WEAVERS is the official semestral publication of the Department of Agriculture-Agricultural Training Institute-Regional Training Center-Cordillera Administrative Region (ATI-RTC-CAR).

This publication contains articles on the latest news relating to or about the training activities, technologies, updates, and success stories of the Institute and its clients.

WEAVERS welcomes comments and suggestions from readers.

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Showcasing First Fruits of Farm and Fisheries Consolidation Approach in Northern and Central Luzon: CAR Hosts 2022 F2C2 Luzon A Cluster Summit



BAGUIO CITY. The first ever Farm and Fisheries Clustering and Consolidation (F2C2) summit for northern and central Luzon pushed through on June 14 to 16, 2022 at the Hotel Supreme in Baguio City. F2C2, also known as Bayanihan Agri-Clusters, is the first of the 18 strategies under the One DA Reform Agenda aiming to achieve a modernized and competitive Philippine agriculture sector. This summit, with the theme "F2C2 A Strategy for Sustainable Rural Development" is a showcase of the journey of farmer and fishers' clusters, in partnership with the Department of Agriculture and other

stakeholders, in realizing the objectives of farm and fisheries clustering and consolidation.

DA-RFO-CAR Regional Executive Director Cameron P. Odsey led the DA-CAR in welcoming participants and guests to the DA F2C2 Luzon A Cluster Summit. Joining RED Odsey from the DA-CAR family are ATI-RTC-CAR OIC Charlie C. Sagudan, BFAR-CAR Assistant Regional Director Lois June B. Fermin, and CAR RAFC Chair Ryan U. Palunan. In his welcome message RED Odsey related the Cordillera region's cultural and historical experience as a

region with unique, diverse, and at the same time closely related peoples practicing in their own ways the principles of clustering and consolidation. DA F2C2 Program Director Shandy M. Hubilla headed the guests for the first F2C2 summit. He is joined by Emerson D. Yago from the ATI Central Office who is also the F2C2 Deputy Program Director. PhilRICE Isabela Branch Manager Joy Bartolome A. Duldulao also joined the guests during the activity.

Senator Cynthia A. Villar, Chair of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, DA Secretary William



D. Dar, and DA Undersecretary for Operations Ariel T. Cayanán sent their respective prerecorded messages for the summit. In her keynote address Senator Villar emphasized the need for clustering and consolidation as one of the means to uplift the life of marginalized and smallholder farmers. Secretary Dar for his part recounted how the DA's efforts in advocating and implementing clustering and consolidation had come a long way up to the present. He furthered that the DA remains steadfast in promoting farm and fisheries clustering and consolidation, popularly known as the Bayanihan Agri Clusters (BAC), as this is the first among its 18 key strategies under the One DA Reform Agenda. Usec. Cayanán, meanwhile, pointed out that one of the main objectives of the F2C2 summit is to promote the "big brother, small brother" partnership focusing on how advanced and larger farmers' cooperatives can assist new and starting farmer cooperatives.

DA F2C2 Program Director Hubilla gave the first input for the plenary session in his presentation on the F2C2 program situationer, updates, framework and implementing

guidelines. Director Hubilla reiterated that F2C2 is not something that is totally new and in fact it has been existing for a long time. This time, however, it was given a name and a renewed attention through the One DA Reform Agenda. It was also emphasized during the input that the implementation of the F2C2 program is in conjunction with other key strategies of the One DA Reform Agenda such as the Province-led Agriculture and Fisheries Extension System, and from the gains of other DA programs and projects such as the Philippine Rural Development Program (PRDP) among others.

Another feature of the F2C2 Luzon A Cluster Summit is the exhibit of F2C2 groups from CAR, Regions 1, 2, and 3 where clusters, collectively known in the DA as Farmer Cooperatives and Associations (FCA) showcased their products from fresh produce to processed products from matured farm businesses. DA F2C2 Program Director Shandy M. Hubilla and DA-RFO-CAR Regional Executive Director Cameron P. Odsey led the opening of the summit's exhibit area. As the host region, CAR featured one of the outputs of

the F2C2 program in the region focusing on one of its regional focus commodities which is coffee. The Atok Kape, which is a product brand name of the Atok Coffee Growers Association based in the municipality of Atok in the province of Benguet, filled the venue with the aroma of freshly brewed Arabica coffee-based coffee drinks. Summit participants were able to grab a cup of either plainly brewed Atok Kape Arabica coffee, Americano, or a shot or two of espresso.

Aside from discussing potential business ventures with the coffee industry stakeholders in Benguet, participants from regions 1, 2, and 3 also learned some basic features of fresh coffee brewing since the practice is not common in their respective localities. Aside from coffee, delegates from CAR also featured fresh highland, vegetables, heirloom rice from the provinces of Kalinga, and Mountain Province, and other Cordilleran processed products. The delegation from Region 2 sported munggo which is one of Cagayan Valley's trademarks in terms of agriculture produce. Rice, onions, and other processed products of the region's agri clusters were showcased during

the event. Aside from rice, Region 3 brought to the spotlight their signature salted eggs and other agri products of clusters from Central Luzon.

The summit's plenary sessions for the first day continued covering inputs from the Agricultural Credit Policy Council through Ms. Felipinas D. Gerardo who presented ACPC's credit programs which the participating clusters may avail. Farmer groups also took the opportunity to clarify issues that their respective groups experienced in accessing ACPC credit programs. As a result, Ms. Gerardo was able to clarify some gray areas with the FCAs present and she was also able to gather pending issues for referrals to concerned ACPC personnel. The Sorosoro Ibaba Development Cooperative (SIDC) came in next sharing their Cooperative's story and how they actualized the concepts of clustering and consolidation. Ms. Hazel May A. Sastado, the Business Development Manager of SIDC, started her sharing through the SIDC's experience in cooperative building. She then bridged the SIDC's cooperative building journey to their adoption of clustering and consolidation as a





venue for improving their services and products value chain. After her sharing of their Cooperative's experience in cooperative building and in clustering and consolidation, participants inquired on possible partnerships and business linkages where their group can venture with SIDC. The second day of the DA-F2C2 Luzon A Cluster Summit plenary session focused on two main parts which are the inputs from resource persons and the sharing of F2C2 experience among the FCAs present. Mr. John Vincent

Q. Gastanes, Founder of the Project Zacchaeus Marketing Cooperative highlighted the role of digital marketing in realizing the benefits of farm clustering and consolidation. He also emphasized how the youth, in their experience, can become powerful agents of digital marketing. The role of women in agriculture particularly in farm clustering and consolidation was also highlighted through Ms. Annete C. Patdu who is the founder of the Diaspora Farm Resort. Ms. Patdu reiterated

that women themselves must persist in innovating starting from within the home leading to the farm up to marketing. Capping the summit's plenary session is the sharing of experiences from selected FCAs representing CAR, regions 1, 2, and 3.

The summit's final day brought the participants to the Haight's Place farm located in Paoay, Atok, Benguet which is one of the DA-CAR's target areas for F2C2 implementation involving



highland vegetables. Ms. Cherry Sano, Municipal Agriculturist of Atok, gave an orientation on the agricultural profile of the municipality while Mr. Edward Haight represented the farmers' groups in the area. Mr. Haight gave an overview of the area and the farm where he highlighted the historical developments of the vegetable industry in Benguet tracing its major roots right in their farm. He also noted that one of the main causes of the perennial issue of oversupply of

vegetables and the consequent drop of prices in the market is the uncoordinated production system in the province where farmers tend to plant the same type of vegetables across barangays and municipalities. This practice, as Mr. Haight illustrated, will bring in huge volume of vegetables to the market almost at the same time while no matching significant increase in demand is present to absorb the volume thus plunging

the market price so low that most farmers would rather choose to give their produce for free or just leave the crops to rot in the field. He then concluded that this scenario can be best addressed through a working and sustained farm clustering and consolidation. After Mr. Haight's sharing of their farm and marketing experiences, participants were able to witness firsthand how potatoes are harvested at the farm. (ACP Velasco)



Looking through the Grassroots View: ATI-RTC-CAR Focuses AFE-RBME Lens on 2019 Extension Interventions

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET. Extension is “consistently listening to the people” thus, the Agricultural Training Institute-Regional Training Center-Cordillera Administrative Region (ATI-RTC-CAR) continues to mainstream the Agriculture and Fishery Extension - Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation (AFE - RBME) along its services. Now on its fourth year of implementation, the 2022 AFE-RBME in CAR aims to gather feedback from 337 farmers and 33 Agricultural Extension Workers (AEW) who underwent ATI-implemented trainings and other extension interventions in 2019.

The AFE-RBME is a system that gathers and analyzes the results of ATI’s extension interventions such as policies, programs, and projects. The system zeroes in to the answers of the “so what” questions on ATI implemented extension interventions. Through the AFE-RBME, services are studied and analyzed in terms of

success of implementation and if these have produced the actual and intended results based on the objectives of the interventions. Hence, the AFE-RBME will study the services which the Institute delivered at least three years ago.

The system covers three major parts namely the immediate, intermediate, and long-term results. Under the immediate results, the AFE-RBME digs into the access to and improvements in the provision of services, and the attitude, skills and knowledge of clients acquired from the intervention. The intermediate results cover improvements on the clients’ productivity, resiliency, and overall empowerment, while the long-term result is concerned on their increased competitiveness.

Taking the AFE-RBME’s opening salvo for this year in CAR are the training graduates of the Updates on Corn Production and Financial Literacy in Alfonso Lista,

Ifugao. The ATI-CAR AFE-RBME team visited the respondents from barangays San Quintin and Calimag in Alfonso Lista on March 7, 2022. The next day, the ATI-RTC-CAR team met with ten graduates of the Climate Smart Farm Business School (CSFBS) in Malin-awa, Tabuk City, Kalinga for the same interview. The CSFBS is an ATI-RTC-CAR funded intervention in 2019 and was co-implemented with the Tabuk City Agriculture Office at Malin-awa, Tabuk City, Kalinga. Still from Tabuk City, graduates of various trainings from Barangay Bulanao also went through the AFE-RBME interview on March 8, 2022.

Training graduates from the municipalities of Dolores, La Paz, and Lagangilang in Abra came in next for the AFE-RBME series of interview. Participants from Lagangilang met with the ATI-CAR team on March 9, 2022, La Paz on March 10, 2022 while graduates from Dolores were

interviewed on March 11, 2022. Aside from farmer graduates, concerned AEW trainees from the local government units (LGU) were also interviewed for the AFE-RBME.

The team headed back to Abra on March 21-23, 2022 this time for the interview of training graduates from the municipalities of San Isidro and Villaviciosa. Ms. Hermina C. Bolaoit, Municipal Agriculturist of Villaviciosa, gathered 18 participants from barangays Ap-apaya, Laplapog and Lumaba on March 21, 2022 at Laplapog, Villaviciosa, Abra. Graduates from barangays Bolilising and Tamac, followed the next day through the vehicle assistance of the Municipal LGU of Villaviciosa as access to these barangays prove to be one of the most difficult in the area. Thus, the ATI-CAR team were able to gather feedback from 35 respondents in Villaviciosa with four coming from Ap-apaya, five each from Laplapog and Lumaba, nine from Bolilising and eight from Tamac. The respondents are graduates of the two batches of the Training

on Business Plan Preparation for Farmers of Villaviciosa, Abra which is an ATI-funded proposal of the Villaviciosa Municipal Agriculture Office in 2019.

Graduates of another ATI-funded training proposal, particularly the Training on Ube Production Technology for Farmers of San Isidro, Abra also provided their feedback on March 21, 2022. The Municipal Agriculture Office of San Isidro, which proposed the said training, coordinated the invitation of respondents from barangays Dalimag, Pantoc, Poblacion and Tangbao. The ATI-RTC-CAR will continuously run this activity in coordination with the concerned LGU until the target number of respondents are met.

The AFE-RBME results will form part of the inputs for the ATI’s planning and implementation of upcoming extension services. The ATI-RTC-CAR intends to interview 33 AEW and 337 farmers or 370 respondents for this year’s AFE-RBME implementation. Aside from the AFE-RBME, the

ATI-RTC-CAR also continuously update and validate its database on the AEW profile with the agriculture and veterinary offices of local government units it visits during the AFE-RBME and other activities.

The results and analyses of the feedback gathered through the AFE-RBME will guide the ATI personnel, and other extension program implementers as it will provide them with an enhanced view of how interventions work in the field. It will also serve as a ready tool for the ATI management in crafting better-informed and evidence-based decisions for the continual improvement delivery of its of services. Moreover, the AFE-RBME is also one of the Institute’s response to the mandate of increased transparency and accountability in government. *(ACP Velasco with reports from Khareen B. Tigui-ing, Gideon T. Ammang and Ian Jade V. Watawat)*



CBF Stakeholders Convene for Japan-MAFF Funded Project Implementation

MANKAYAN, BENGUET. The Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) Central Office together with its Regional Training Center in the Cordillera, the Department of Agriculture-Regional Field Office-CAR (DA-RFO-CAR), various institutional buyers, and representatives of the Manpat-a Farmers Association, Raniag Farmers Association, and Blestdam Farmers Irrigators Association, Inc. converged for a meeting and agree to implement the project “Capability Building Project for Farmers Organization (CBF) to support the development of food value chain in ASEAN countries” on March 9, 2022 at the Agricultural Training Institute-Regional Training Center-

Cordillera Administrative Region (ATI-RTC-CAR). The project is funded by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) of Japan. CBF aims to increase and strengthen the potential of farmers to engage in farm business and improve their income, and to achieve a diversified food system for business-oriented practices and enterprise. Also, it aims for a sustainable production through crop diversification and access to credit and market linkage for the Farmer Cooperative and Association (FCA).

ATI Director Rosana P. Mula highlighted the importance of local buyers and institutional buyers to the FCA Officers as one of the main rationale of the project. Mr. Emerson S. Yago of ATI Central Office then presented the overview of the project giving emphasis to its objective which is the strengthening of FCA members competitiveness through capability building. Capability building interventions will include training activities, provide technical support to the FCAs and links clustered FCAs to local markets and other institutional buyers. The pilot project was conceptualized

in response to the issues of postharvest losses, over supply and low prices of fresh crops, lack of access to financial and social support, decreasing farmlands and mono cropping. The target area of the project is Benguet particularly in Balili, Mankayan with the targeted FCAs which are the Manpat-a Farmers Association, Blestdam Farmers Irrigators Association Inc., and Raniag Farmers Association.

As the project involves various stakeholders, their roles were also clarified during the meeting. Institutional buyers will specify their requirements such as quality and volume prior to agreement. The DA-RFO-CAR will assist in preparing the FCAs in complying to the requirements of institutional buyers. The ATI (both national and regional) will lead in the provision of training

interventions and will also invite JA Zenchu (Central Union of Agricultural Cooperative) to provide technical expertise. The JA-ZENCHU is an organization in Japan which has been enhancing Japan’s agricultural cooperatives through various cooperative strengthening activities. The three FCAs, for their part, will form themselves as a cluster organization to consolidate the FCAs produce before transacting with institutional buyers. Ms. Cryza Datic, the DA-RFO-CAR F2C2 focal person, also informed the group that farm profiling is one of the preparatory activities to be undertaken. She then requested the project team to wait for the result of the farm profiling as basis of the trainings for the FCAs.

On March 10, 2022 a team from MAFF, DA-RFO-CAR, ATI-CO, ATI-RTC-CAR, and MLGU Mankayan went to Balili, Mankayan, Benguet for field visits and validation. The team randomly visited eight individual farms of members coming from Raniag FA, Manpat-a, and Blesdam Farmers Association. Most of the crops planted are potatoes, carrots, crucifers and legumes. Majority of farmers are GAP certified and the rest were currently undergoing validation by the BPI and DA-RFO-CAR. Basilio Ngaseo President of the Manpat-a FA, shared that GAP certification is one of their requirements to become a member of their organization. Signing of agreements will take place after the FCAs undergone the capability trainings.



ATI-RTC-CAR Hosts DA's Dialogue with Benguet's Vegetable Industry Stakeholders on Vegetable Smuggling

Responding to the persistent clamor among vegetable industry players from Benguet and its neighboring provinces against the alleged resurgence of vegetable smuggling in the country, the Department of Agriculture sent some of its top management officials for a dialogue with industry stakeholders at the Agricultural Training Institute-Regional Training Center-Cordillera Administrative Region (ATI-RTC-CAR) in La Trinidad, Benguet on March 19, 2022. Leading the DA delegation is Undersecretary for Research,

Innovation, Training and Extension Support and concurrent Chief-of-Staff Leocadio S. Sebastian who came with Assistant Secretary for the DA-Wide Field Inspectorate Federico E. Laciste, Jr. and DA-Bureau of Plant Industry (DA-BPI) Director George Y. Culaste. The DA-Regional Field Office-CAR (DA-RFO-CAR) High Value Crops Development Program facilitated the activity with Regional Executive Director Cameron P. Odsey presiding over the said forum.

Through the meeting, representatives from the various segments across of the vegetable industry value chain were able to express the challenges they are currently experiencing due to the impacts of vegetable smuggling. The group also presented information which they have gathered proving the existence and increased occurrence of vegetable smuggling particularly among major vegetable market outlets in the country. While appreciative of the DA's response to their plea for help, particularly that of the DA-RFO-CAR, the

group remain highly expectant for more concrete and concerted actions from the government in addressing vegetable smuggling. In response ASec. Laciste, who also heads the DA and DTI based Sub-Task Group on Economic Intelligence, presented the sub-task group's efforts in curbing vegetable smuggling. Acknowledging the vital role of the vegetable industry stakeholders, particularly their consistent vigilance and cooperation with authorities, he also invited the meeting participants to remain in constant communication with the sub-task group. DA-BPI Director Culaste also assured the group that the BPI has not issued any sanitary and phyto-sanitary import

clearance for fresh vegetables such as carrots, cabbage, potato, and broccoli. Usec. Sebastian also encouraged the stakeholder representatives to continue and sustain their empowerment and development. He emphasized the need for a more cohesive and unified vegetable industry group to amplify their voice particularly in policy formulation and implementation. Finally, it was also agreed during the activity that the DA will again meet the group and that the concerned local government units will also be invited.

President Rodrigo R. Duterte formed the Sub-Task Group on Economic Intelligence under the IATF-Food Security

Group in February 2021. Through the sub-task group, the President ordered the DA and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) to coordinate with law enforcement agencies in hunting down smugglers, profiteers and hoarders of food commodities. The DA and DTI are co-chairs to the sub-task group, with the Department of Justice, Department of Interior and Local Government, National Bureau of, Philippine National Police, Bureau of Customs, Philippine Competition Commission, National Security Council (NSC), and the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency as members.



Showcasing the Uniqueness of Cordilleran Organic Agriculture: La Trinidad's Cosmic Farm Hosts DA ASec Laciste and Team from DA-Wide Field Inspectorate

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET. Mr. Rogel Marsan of the Cosmic Farm, together with his family, received DA Assistant Secretary for the DA-Wide Field Inspectorate Federico E. Laciste, Jr and his team for a visit at their farm in Caban, Beckel, La Trinidad, Benguet on March 19, 2022. The farm visit provided the team with an overall view of some of the

DA's extension modalities being implemented in the Cordillera Administrative Region through the Agricultural Training Institute-Regional Training Center-Cordillera Administrative Region (ATI-RTC-CAR) in partnership with the DA-Regional Field Office-CAR (DA-RFO-CAR), local government units, and other stakeholders. As Mr. Marsan showed the

team around his farm, he also shared their farming practices and technologies that they have either adopted or developed including their notable experiences and accomplishments as a farming family. He then highlighted their partnership journey with the DA in the delivery of extension services in the community through the ATI-RTC-CAR's LSA



and SPA extension modalities. With his limited production area Mr. Marsan likewise explained to the team how their farm remains a viable agriculture enterprise through diversified cropping, production of unique crops, and processing of fresh produce. Cosmic farm is one of the first ATI-certified schools for practical agriculture (SPA) in CAR specializing in organic agriculture. As an extension modality, Cosmic farm started as one of the pioneering ATI-certified learning sites for agriculture (LSA) as early as 2012. As LSA, the Cosmic Farm was able to adopt, demonstrate and practice applicable technologies on

organic agriculture. Through the years of practice and experience it was also able to develop its own unique and location-specific farming technologies. As LSA the farm mainly performed its role in technology demonstration by serving as a visit and demonstration site for training participants from the ATI-RTC-CAR, DA-RFO-CAR, LGU, and other government and private institutions. In 2016 the ATI-RTC-CAR upscaled the Cosmic Farm LSA into a school for practical agriculture. As SPA, the farm is equipped not just with the basic requirements for an LSA such as a sufficient area for technology demonstration. Rather, it already

has at least a training hall and a lodging facility to accommodate participants for onsite trainings which last for more than a day thus, SPA are also known as "training centers in the field." Aside from being an ATI-certified SPA, Cosmic Farm is also a Farm Tourism Site accredited by the Department of Tourism-CAR, and is also a TESDA-certified training and assessment center for organic agriculture catering to various clients including students, professionals, farmers, and other agriculture enthusiasts.

KALINGA, IFUGAO RICE CLUSTERS' VENTURE TOWARDS VALUE-ADDING



In today's business environment, agro-food processing optimizes returns from a farmer's toil. Rice for instance has its own market share of value-added products which are significant in improving the profitability of rice communities in the Cordilleras.

Recognizing such, 30 members and representatives of the Western Tabuk Rice Cluster and Alfonso Lista Rice Cluster Federation, Inc. were convened for a Project Development Training for Small Enterprise: Training on Value Added Processing on Rice and Rice

By-Products at the Agricultural Training Institute-Regional Training Center-Cordillera Administrative Region (ATI-RTC-CAR) on March 28 – April 1, 2022.

This forms part of the Department of Agriculture's Farm and Fisheries Clustering and Consolidation Program (DA-F2C2) for greater inclusive agri-business development. The clusters as established community-based enterprises are being strengthened to upscale from sustenance farming

into a more focused business enterprise. Hence, the training was meant to reinforce rice-based product development and basic cost and return analysis to boost the farmers' income.

In his opening message, ATI-RTC-CAR OIC-Center Director Charlie Sagudan reminded that food preparation is a basic life skill and not a gender role. "Whether you're a husband or a wife, a woman or a man, you have to know how to cook," he furthered recognizing the active participation of women in

food processing as well as the involvement of male participants who have joined the training.

The lecture-discussions started with an input on Good Management Practices and Food Safety highlighting the current Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) and its components. This was followed by series of talks and hands-on demonstrations on pancit canton making enriched with vegetables including its production costing and nutritional profile; rice wine and binubudan making; and rice crackers, choco rice crispies, rice fudge, and rice coffee preparations.

"We express our appreciation for this opportunity to be able to join this training. We were given

various ideas on how to diversify our rice produce so that we do not merely focus on one product or on the usual. We enjoyed our stay and our learning sessions" Sheril Macadangdang of Alfonso Lista, Ifugao shared. Mae Sacyat of Tabuk City, Kalinga added that the additional inputs from the resource speakers resolved their queries. "We acknowledge that we do not know everything and that this training cleared up our how's," she said. Moreover, Annie Mury Santiago, a youth representative of the Kalinga cluster stated that the training might not be in line with her degree but the skills learned from the trainers are practical which are absolutely useful to anybody regardless of profession.

The activity was a joint undertaking of ATI-RTC-CAR, Benguet State University-Food Science Research Innovation Center (BSU-FSRIC) and BSU-Northern Philippine Root Crops Research and Training Center (NPRCRTC).

To date, there are already 12 clusters in CAR which are collaborative projects of DA-RFO-CAR, ATI-RTC-CAR, BFAR-CAR, PhilRice-Isabela and PhilMech. (DAEstephan)



Mountain Province Draws First Blood Samples for the ATI-RTC-CAR's 2022 Training on Specimen Collection for Barangay Biosecurity Officers

BONTOC, MOUNTAIN PROVINCE. Mountain Province took the first shots in the continuing Bantay ASF sa Barangay Training on Specimen Collection for Barangay Biosecurity Officers (BBO) for 2022 in the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR). Jumping off from its initial implementation of the training program in the municipalities of Paracelis and Bauko last year, the Provincial Veterinary Office (PVO) of Mountain Province expanded the training early this year to the municipalities of Bontoc and Sabangan on February 16 and

24, 2022 respectively. The municipality of Sagada followed on March 10, 2022 while participants from the municipalities of Bauko and Tadian completed the training on March 15, 2022.

Bontoc sent eleven BBO to the activity which were added to another eleven coming from Sabangan composing this year's first batch of graduates for this training. Coming in next is the training in Sagada which produced 15 graduates, and another batch held in Tadian with 17 BBO from Tadian and six from Bauko finishing the course. As pilot municipalities, there were 19 BBO from Paracelis and another 19 BBO from Bauko who underwent the said training on April 22, 2021 and June 18, 2021 respectively. Through these trainings, there are now 95 BBO trained in Mountain Province to assist the PVO and their respective municipal local government units on animal biosecurity concerns at the barangay level.

The BBOs are volunteer animal health workers based in their respective barangays and are under the supervision of the PVO. Their tasks include assisting the PVO and the Municipal Agriculture Office in the monitoring and surveillance of animal diseases. This program is one of the offshoots of the Philippine experience on the African Swine Fever (ASF) and is implemented as one of the measures to control and prevent the

further spread of ASF through the wider Bantay ASF sa Barangay (BABay ASF) program.

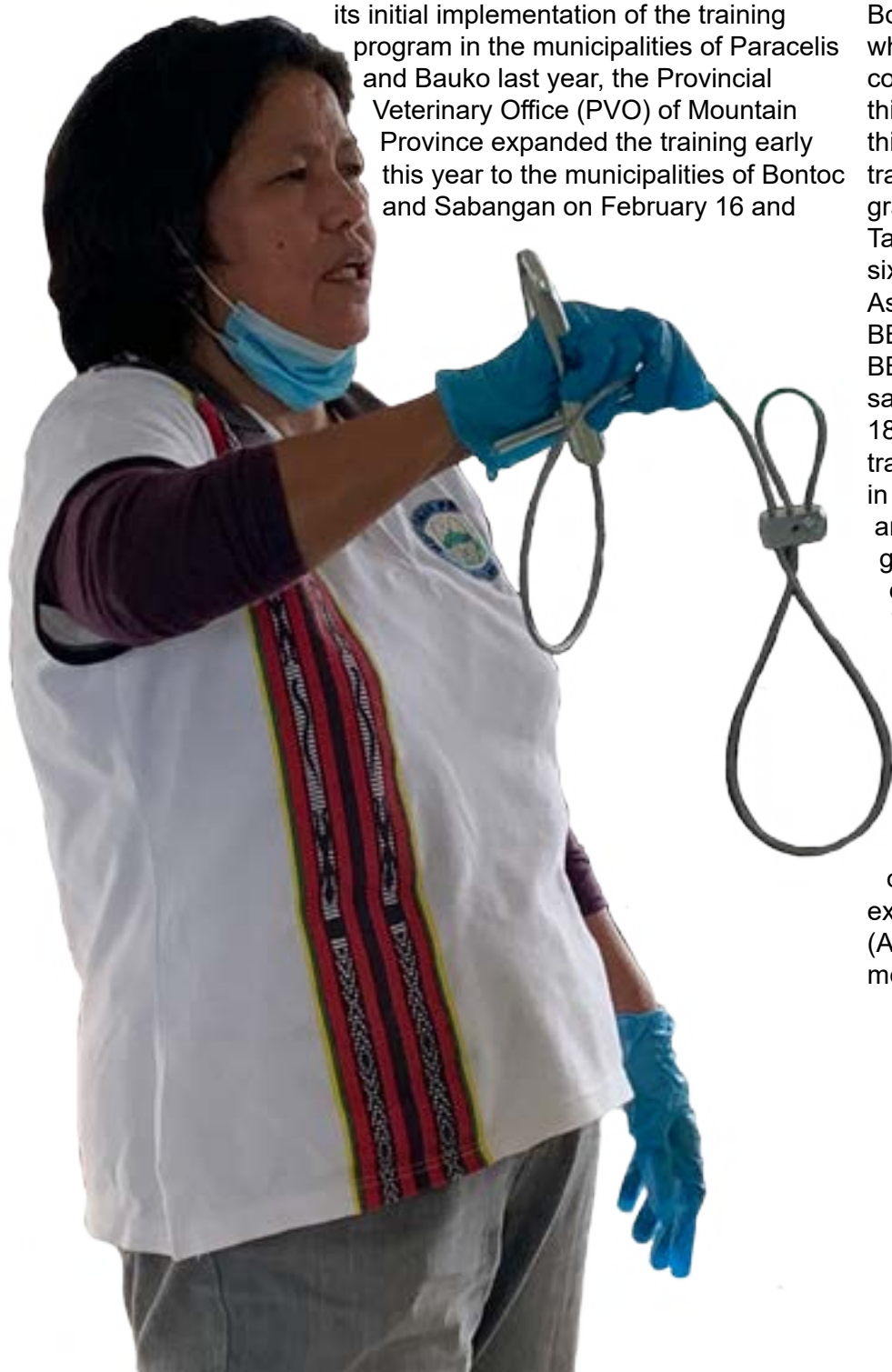
This training is mainly implemented in CAR through the Agricultural Training Institute-Regional Training Center-CAR (ATI-RTC-CAR) in partnership with the DA-Regional Field Office-CAR (DA-RFO-CAR), Provincial and City Veterinary Offices, and Municipal Agriculture Offices in the region. Primarily the BBO, through this training, are being capacitated to enhance their skills in collecting specimens for laboratory testing. This include proper preparation and handling of materials and tools, restraining

of animals, collection, handling, packaging, and transport of specimens.

During the training, resource persons emphasized that mastery in collecting blood for laboratory tests takes time and needs more practice. Hence, it should be done under the supervision of a licensed veterinarian from the MAO or PVO. Aside from specimen collection, participants also did drills in conducting farm biosecurity assessment. Here, they were taught how to be very observant, objective and creative in extracting honest answers from their fellow farmers. Moreover,

BBO were also instructed to be vigilant and strict in the surveillance of animal diseases and in monitoring quarantine measures. Thus, they have to be in constant coordination with the MAO and the PVO. Finally, BBOs will be invited for more related trainings and also during livestock-related activities of the MAO and the PVO at their barangay to further enhance their knowledge and skills.

(With reports from Maribeth M. Ladu-an and Lorna W. Sawac)



Benguet Adds Seven

more Municipalities with BBO Trained on Specimen Collection



LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET. Consistent with its aim for all its 13 municipalities to be complete in terms of Barangay Biosecurity Officers (BBO) trained on specimen collection, the Province of Benguet, through its Provincial Veterinary Office (PVO), persistently partnered with the ATI-RTC-CAR and the DA-RFO-CAR for the inclusion of more Benguet BBO in the training on specimen collection. Through these efforts, the Bantay ASF sa Barangay Training on Specimen Collection for BBO accommodated seven municipalities of Benguet namely Bokod, Buguias, Itogon, Kibungan, Tuba, La Trinidad, and Sablan for the first quarter of 2022. The municipality of Itogon went ahead through the training on February 22, 2022 with 24 BBO finishing the course. Buguias

followed suit the next day with 16 graduates, the next day was scheduled for Bokod for its eight BBO. On March 1, 2022 BBO from the municipality of Kibungan co-hosted the training which yielded 20 graduates. The municipality of Sablan followed the next day with 12 BBO trained while Tuba and La Trinidad were scheduled on March 3, 2022 with eleven BBO from each municipality finishing the training. Thus, there are 102 BBO from Benguet who got trained on specimen collection for this year's first quarter. In 2021 there were 82 BBO from Benguet who were trained under the same course coming from the municipalities of Tuba with seven graduates, Kapanagn with 17 graduates, Kabayan with 31 BBO trained, Atok with 13 graduates, and Tublay 14 BBO who finished the course. In sum the province

of Benguet, as of date has, 184 BBO trained on specimen collection coming from 11 out of its 13 municipalities. The BBO will mainly assist the PVO and their respective municipal local government units on animal biosecurity concerns at the barangay level. The BBOs are volunteer animal health workers based in their respective barangays and are under the supervision of the PVO. Their tasks include assisting the PVO and the Municipal Agriculture Office in the monitoring and surveillance of animal diseases. This program is one of the offshoots of the Philippine experience on the African Swine Fever (ASF) and is implemented as one of the measures to control and prevent the further spread of ASF through the wider Bantay ASF sa Barangay (BABay ASF) program.

This training is implemented in CAR mainly through the Agricultural Training Institute-Regional Training Center-CAR (ATI-RTC-CAR) in partnership with the DA-Reginal Field Office-CAR (DA-RFO-CAR), Provincial and City Veterinary Offices, and Municipal Agriculture Offices in the region. In Benguet, the Municipal Agriculture Office facilitated the identification and invitation of BBO, the PVO provided resource persons and some demonstration materials, while the ATI-RTC-CAR funded the rest of the training resources. Primarily the BBO, through this training, are being capacitated to enhance their skills in collecting specimens for laboratory testing.

This include proper preparation and handling of materials and tools, restraining of animals, collection, handling, packaging, and transport of specimens. During the training, resource persons emphasized that mastery in collecting blood for laboratory tests takes time and needs more practice. Hence, it should be done under the supervision of a licensed veterinarian from the MAO or PVO. Aside from specimen collection, participants also did drills in conducting farm biosecurity assessment. Here, they were taught how to be very observant, objective and creative in extracting honest answers from their fellow farmers. Moreover,

BBO were also instructed to be vigilant and strict in the surveillance of animal diseases and in monitoring quarantine measures. Thus, they have to be in constant coordination with the MAO and the PVO. Finally, BBOs will be invited for more related trainings and also during livestock-related activities of the MAO and the PVO at their barangay to further enhance their knowledge and skills. (With reports from Maribeth M. Ladu-an and Lorna W. Sawac)



Multiplying Knowledge Through Farm Schools:

The JACOB'S LSA STORY

In the farming community of Namnama, Alfonso Lista, Ifugao, there lived a couple named Kenneth Jacob and Susana Jacob who are both agriculture graduates from Ifugao State College of Agriculture and Forestry (ISCAF), currently known as Ifugao State University (IFSU). As a family of farmers, they own two hectares of land, two four-wheel tractors with rotovator, and a rice combine harvester which they manage with their son and daughter.



Based on their narrative, their land was a bare mountain of grasses but later, turned into a fruitful farm that has various components. In fact, the large portion is being utilized for rice production, the parts are planted with fruit trees, and a certain area is used as fishpond and for livestock production.

The Humble Beginning

Life has never been easy for this couple. Admittedly, they were tried and tested by various challenges. In the name of a better future for their family, they

both worked in the overseas. For five years, Mr. Jacob worked in a textile company in Taiwan while Mrs. Jacob worked as a domestic helper in Hongkong for almost ten years. After years of working abroad, they both decided to fly back to the country to build a family of their own. Through their savings and investments from working abroad, they started to venture into various businesses like supplying farm inputs, operating farm machineries, and lending capital to fellow farmers. At first, their businesses were doing well but because of the difficulty in collecting payments in which

any other entrepreneurs struggle with, the couple eventually closed their lending business.

As the head of the family, Kenneth is in-charge of overseeing the farm and their businesses. To ensure the smooth flow of the farming activities, he does the supervising task and hires farm workers to do the labors. Farm operations, from land preparation to harvesting is mainly done by the farm workers.

As time passes by, he is becoming more interested in farming. He consistently goes to the field and observes every



farming operation being done. To gain more knowledge, he actively joined farming-related seminars and trainings. In these endeavors, Mr. Jacob became more passionate in farming and gradually took over the entire management of the farm. Surprisingly, after he took-over, he noticed that his harvest increased compared to their harvest when he was still paying other farmers to do the jobs.

Banking his Hope on his Fellow Farmers

As his love for farming grew, his concern for the welfare of his fellow farmers also ignited. In 2018, he was elected as president of the Namnama-Lay-ong-Sinigpit-Irrigators Association Incorporated. According to Kenneth, being a leader of an organization is not easy. “Organizing or gathering them into a meeting

is a challenge. You have to increase your patience and put extra effort,” he said. His role as a farmer leader became a big challenge for him that led him to believe the old sayings that “you cannot please everybody. However, his longing to help his fellow farmers and his community kept him charging on. During his leadership the organization was able to acquire farm machineries like hand tractor with complete accessories, combine harvester, and a walk behind transplanter through the RCEF mechanization support. As per record, a total PhP 70, 000 as rent payment was remitted by Mr. Jacob to the association.

Today, there are more than a hundred members of the organization already from the original 16 members in 2018.

With their concerted efforts, they were awarded as “Most Outstanding CARP-IC Irrigators Association in 2021.

The Faithful Convert

“Behind a man’s success lies a woman” so they say. While Kenneth is busy managing their farm, Susan does the household chores. At first, she strongly disagreed with her husband in joining trainings and seminars. She wanted to stop Kenneth doing farming operations as well and just leave it to the farm workers. Despite this, Susana still supported her husband, and over time, she learned the rope. One day, her husband obliged her to attend a Training of Trainers offered by ATI. She was hesitant at first because she thought that it will waste her time. However, as a loving wife,

she agreed to her husband’s prodding. The experience was life changing for her. The training opened her eyes to the beauty of continuous learning.

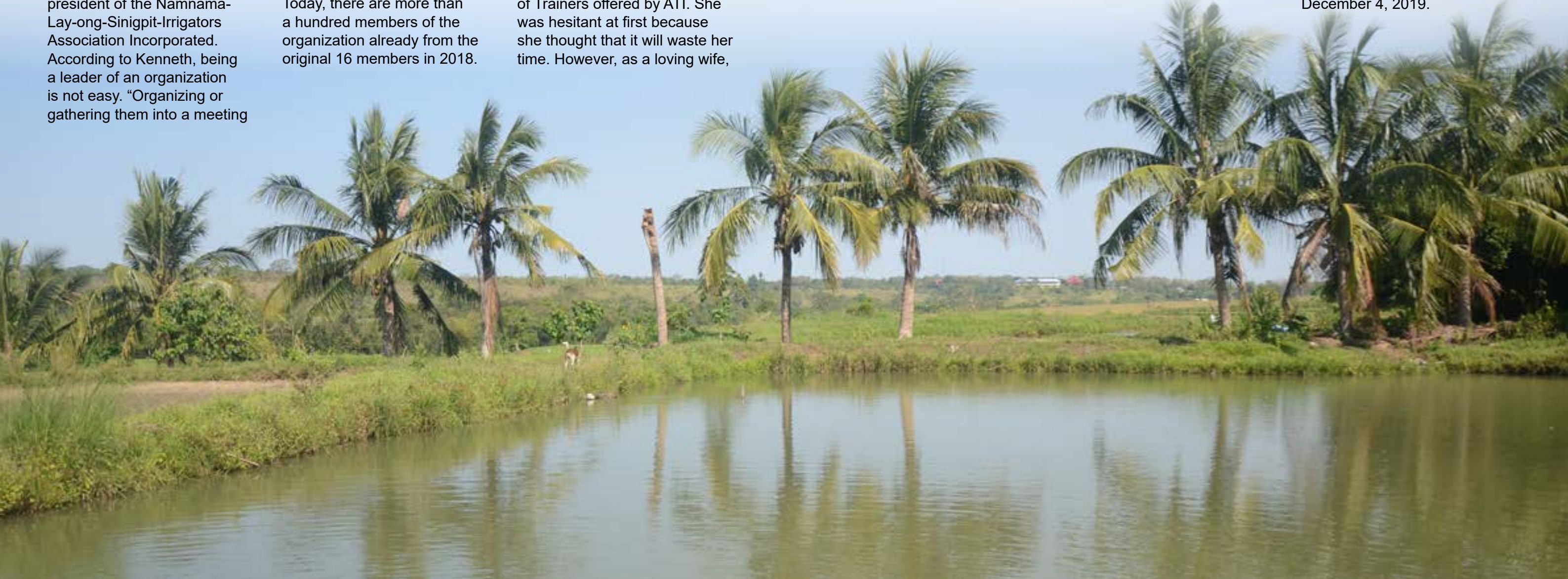
She started appreciating the farming operations through her various exposure to the trainings her husband once participated into. In fact, she became more passionate about the venture and actively shared her learnings to their fellow farmers in their barangay. “As a woman and a wife, we play an important role not just in managing the household but also in managing the farm. We, women, could also do what men can do in farming,” she realized.

At present, all family members are involved in farming activities. Apart from being their livelihood especially amidst the pandemic situation, the farming activities serve as their family bonding, too.

“When it Rains, it Pours”

In 2019, unexpected opportunity opened up to the family. Staff from Agricultural Training Institute- Cordillera Administrative Region (ATI-CAR) led by Engineer Randy Soriano and Ms. Fe Villa, Agricultural Extension Worker of Local Government Office in Alfonso Lista, Ifugao were set to carry out a monitoring activity of the Palayamanan Plus

Project which happened to be situated on the same barangay where the farm of the Jacob is located. It was a gloomy day when they arrived in barangay Namnama. They were exactly at the vicinity of Jacob’s farm when the rain poured down. Mr. Jacob noticed them and offered his house for temporary shelter while waiting for the rain to stop. Upon seeing the farm of Mr. Jacob, Mr. Soriano thought that it has a potential of becoming a Learning Site for Agriculture (LSA), an extension modality being used by ATI. He then briefly discussed the criteria and encouraged the couple to apply. Successfully, Jacob’s farm was officially certified as one of the ATI’s learning sites in Ifugao last December 4, 2019.



As a result of the great news that the couple has received, Mr. Jacob's thirst for agricultural knowledge inspired him to attend more trainings such as the Training of Trainers (TOT) on In-Bred Rice Production, Training on Farm Layout, Design and Landscape, Basic Training Course for Inbred Rice Seed Production and Certification, TOT on Farm Machinery Operation and Maintenance, Pest and Nutrient Management, Training Workshop on Farm Mechanization Operation Management and Enterprise Development, among others. The said trainings significantly helped him improved his farming skills, knowledge and production. With his belief that knowledge multiplied by

sharing, Mr. Jacob took the opportunity to apply and became a Farm School cooperator under the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA).

As a Farm School, they will serve as training providers of the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) modified Farmer Field School (FFS), a perfect venue to share his knowledge and skills in farming to his fellow rice farmers.

The Jacob Farm was the first to conduct a Farmer Field School in Alfonso Lista, Ifugao in 2019. The FFS is designed to train farmers on various topics such as pests and diseases management, soil fertility and water resources management,

local varietal selection and purification, farm mechanization, marketing, record keeping and financial literacy.

Operating the farm school is hard, says the couple. Despite all the efforts and motivations, some trainees are still getting absent and some do not make it to the entire duration of the training. "It's saddening because they will surely miss much," Mrs. Jacob exclaimed. Another challenge that Mr. Jacob added is to strongly convince their fellow farmers to follow the recommendations and techniques being presented to them. "Despite all the positive testimonies and outcome explained and showed to them, they still insist on their old belief and practices" narrated by Mr. Jacob.

Despite these issues, the Jacobs persevered even more. They continued to encourage the farmers to learn new ideas and try new technologies and practices. Their farm school already facilitated three batches of FFS- one batch in 2019 with seventy-five graduates (75), ninety graduates (90) in 2020 and one hundred twenty-five graduates (75) in 2021.

Their efforts paid off and was given a certificate of appreciation for sharing the farm school's Best Practice in Implementation of Rice Extension Services Program (RESP) from TESDA.

The Jacobs' Teaching

As advise to their fellow farmers, Kenneth said "Do not concentrate in one commodity, try to engage in other activities, integrate other business into farming."

"Always grab the opportunity to attend seminars and trainings whenever there is. Learning one or two ideas that will retain in your mind is already a substantial knowledge that you can always apply in your daily life" Susana added.

Amidst all the challenges, the couple is steadfast to continuously teach and conduct

trainings for their fellow farmers. Thankfully, their aspiration even grew more as they started eyeing to become an organic agriculture program (OAP) training provider. They also started building a lodging facility and plans to expand their training hall to accommodate more trainings and trainees. Moreover, they also initiated more landscaping projects in order to add more aesthetic values to the Jacobs farm. (JDNao-oy)








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