



ATI-CAR Training and Extension WEAVERS

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Extension in Lockdown in the Cordilleras



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WEAVERS is the official semestral publication of the Agricultural Training Institute-Cordillera Administrative Region (ATI-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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Extension in Lockdown in the Cordilleras

The year 2020 brought new opportunities for the ATI-CAR to deliver extension services beyond the usual modes the Center has been doing for the previous year. Although the COVID-19 pandemic delimits the implementation of the approved WFP for CY 2020, it facilitated new interventions and innovations to deliver extension services for ATI-CAR.

The COVID-19 especially in the implementation of the Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) prohibited travels and the conduct of field activities and trainings requiring large group-of which are the main activities of the ATI. The COVID-19 caused the refocusing of some of the programs to contribute to food security and the Department of Agriculture's Plant Plant Plant Program – Urban Agriculture (UA).

In response and anchored to the UA of the Department, ATI CAR implemented the UA/Home Gardening with coaching method as a strategy that facilitated a total of 66 coaching activities with 1,203 participants served and provided with starter kits, 19 of which were held at the ATI CAR's Learnings Site (LS) for Urban Agriculture with 308 participants. Aside from ATI CAR's LSA as a venue, the coaching activities were also conducted in some barangays of Benguet – La Trinidad, Tuba, Tublay, Sablan, Itogon,



Atok, Kapangan; Baguio City – Lucnab, Irisan, Loakan, Happy Hallow; and Sagada, Mt. Province in partnership with their respective Office of the Agricultural Services and Barangay Local Government Unit. The coaching activities provided knowledge and skills on the basics of urban and home gardening and sustainable farming technologies such as preparation of natural farming

inputs, composting, soil fertility management, and basic swine and poultry production. As a concluding event for the UA/ Home Garden, the ATIng Gulayan Harvest Festival for CAR was held on December 10, 2020 at the ATI CAR LSA on Urban Agriculture that also recognized the different partners and home garden champions in the implementation of the UA.

Complementing the coaching method as a strategy, ATI CAR also resorted to relay coaching and boundary-to-boundary transaction to deliver extension activities as well as supplies and materials (starter kits, printed IEC materials, itik pullets) specifically to the LGUs where outside residents were not allowed to enter the area. Not limited to urban agriculture program, boundary-to-boundary transactions made possible also the implementation of target activities for rice-based integrated farming system; School-on-the-Air; Rice Competiveness Enhancement Program; LSA and SPA enhancement and LGU-AEWs orientation as they were mobilized as field trainers; and Village Learning Site Project for Pidigan, Abra within the year at the provincial boundaries in Benguet and Mt. Province, Ifugao and Nueva Viscaya, Abra and Ilocos Sur and municipal borders in Paracelis and Natonin, Mt. Province and Flora and Luna, Apayao. The success of these boundary transactions was coupled with strengthened coordination through social media, phone call and texts and the same means were used for post-activity concerns.

In support to UA, the Center also intensified its use of the internet and radio as media of service delivery. (*JSSagpa-ey*)



Overcoming COVID-19 Boundary Barriers: ATI-CAR and LGUs Sustain Rice Extension Services Despite Travel Restrictions

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET. The risk of COVID-19 infection made provinces and municipalities in the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) impose strict travelling rules specially for those entering their areas of jurisdiction. This consequently posted challenges in the delivery of extension service in CAR although alternative modes such as online platforms have been adopted. Still, the ATI-CAR faces

challenges in providing quality extension service via these alternative modes considering the poor internet connectivity in most of the Region's rural areas. Aside from the difficulty of delivering extension services, access to food is increasingly threatened in both rural and urban communities as the COVID-19 pandemic rages.

In response, the Department of Agriculture launched

interventions such as the Plant, Plant, Plant Program (PPPP). This program aims to intensify community and urban household food production through planting of cash crops and raising of poultry and small ruminants. In support to the PPP Program, the ATI refocused its interventions intended for activities involving large crowd gatherings to basic production for crops and livestock for smaller and community-based

groups. Under the rice program, the adoption and promotion of rice-based integrated farming system (RBIFS) was adopted as one of the strategies to complement the PPPP in rice production. Through this system, crops and livestock is integrated in rice farming to diversify sources of food and income for rice producing communities as they cope-up with the COVID-19 pandemic.



Mr. Randy Soriano, Rice Focal Person, orients Ms. Carmen Fomegas (right) AT of Sagada, Mt. Province and Ms. Lilia Jagodilla (middle), MA of Sabangan, Mt. Province on the mechanics of the Rice-based Integrated Farming Systems (RFIS) at the Benguet and Mt. Province provincial boarder.

The RBIFS is a holistic farm management system which aims to integrate sustainable agriculture practices in rice production. It includes interrelated set of enterprises with rice production as the base activity. It also promotes integration of different farming components like vegetables, fisheries and livestock to improve food productivity and income. For example, the integration of ducks in rice farming will serve as biological pest control for golden apple snails and at the same time improves rice field soil fertility. Moreover, vegetables provide nutritious food and additional income for the farmers and their families.

In CAR, 12 batches of RBIFS were launched covering the municipalities of Luba and Villaviciosa in Abra, Itogon

and Sablan in Benguet, and Bauko, Tadian, Sabangan, Sagada, Besao, Bontoc and Natonin in Mountain Province. There will be 20 farmers from each municipality who will undergo a short orientation on the RBIFS following health protocols. Afterwards, each of the farmers will receive a set of vegetable seeds, garden tools, and 12 heads of itik as starter kit. Handouts and other printed IEC materials are also included in the starter kits to guide the recipients. Training materials and other resources are also provided for the agricultural extension workers who will facilitate the activity.

The delivery of training supplies and starter kits to the partner LGUs became more

challenging with the COVID-19 travel restrictions specifically for inter-provincial travels. In the case of Mt. Province, the ATI-CAR team and the representatives from the concerned municipalities were only allowed to meet along the border of Benguet and Mt. Province at Sinto, Bauko, Mt. Province. Meanwhile, the supplies for Abra were delivered at the Ilocos Sur-Abra border in Narvacan, Ilocos Sur. Hence, the recipient LGUs had to receive and transfer the supplies right beside the road since they were only allowed to transact official business at their respective provincial borders.

The moment they move out of their respective provincial borders will require them to undergo the mandatory 14-days quarantine. The same scenario went for the ATI-CAR team as they had to give instructions regarding the RBIFS activity to the LGU representatives not in training halls anymore but at the roadside. Nonetheless, prior coordination was made via phone calls, SMS, and social media and the same will be used for post-activity concerns.

As of date, the seven recipient municipalities of Mountain Province were able to implement their respective RBIFS orientations involving 141 rice farmers. The ATI-CAR led the conduct of the RBIFS orientations in Benguet last July while the orientations for the municipalities of Luba and Villaviciosa in Abra will be conducted later this year. *(RAGSumedca with reports from RT Soriano)*



ATIng Kaalaman Sa Agrikultura

debuts as ATI-CAR's radio program for sharing agricultural information and technologies

In an effort to reach-out to clients amidst the challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, ATI-CAR launched its own radio program dubbed as "ATIng Kaalaman sa Agrikultura."



The radio program, which is the first in ATI-CAR, is part of the modalities that the Center has implemented in its intensified information dissemination drive geared to bridge and overcome the challenges brought by the pandemic in the delivery of extension services.

In partnership with Mountain Province Broadcasting Corporation - DZWT 540 AM, the radio program aimed to share the programs and services of ATI as well as information and technologies on Urban Gardening and Livestock Production in support to the "Ahon Lahat Pagkaing Sapat Kontra COVID 19 or ALPAS COVID-19 program of the Department of Agriculture.

It was aired every Wednesdays at 11:00-11:30 AM under the DZWT's "Kumpletos Rekados" program anchored by Madam Rose Malekchan a.k.a. Aling Rosa.

As a way to gauge the numbers of active listeners or clients reached, the radio program featured a "text promo" portion where listeners can have a chance to win a complete Urban Gardening Starter Kit by answering questions (through text) about the topics discussed after each episode. Five winners were selected per episode through an electronic raffle application. The starter kit is



enough for winners to start a mini-vegetable garden that can supply their home consumption, or even more, for an extra income. In this way, homeowners can indirectly contribute in the alleviation of malnutrition and food security.

The starter kit is composed of 5 kinds of vegetable seeds, 10-kilo vermicast, 2 seedling trays, polyethylene plastic bags, hand trowel and a plastic waterer. A total of 1,241 texters participated

in the promo wherein, 106 were drawn as winners. Initially, the text promo was limited to Cordillera residents, however, in the spirit of providing excellent extension service beyond boundaries, texters from other regions were also considered.

One highlight of the radio program is the active participation of ATI-CAR's private partners in the field. Two Magsasaka Siyentista (MS) of the Center were tapped to share their expertise in various agriculture technologies. Mr. Steven Abanag, MS of Baguio City shared his expertise in aquaponics or the integration of soil-less crop culture and fish culture in water tanks. Also, Mr. Eric Tinoy-an, another MS also shared his expertise on the use of botanical pesticides and fertilizers.

Likewise, Mr. Jefferson Laruan, a certified School for Practical Agriculture cooperator of the Center shared his expertise in organic farming particularly on managing soil fertility, composting and the production and use of "Mukosaku" or wood vinegar. A private partner, Dr. Jay Cariño, DVM, also shared his expertise in pests and diseases management of free-ranged chickens.

ATI-CAR technical staff also shared their expertise on the following topics: Urban Agriculture Program shared by Mr. Charlie C. Sagudan; Edible landscaping and containerized gardening by Ms. Resley Ann Sumedca; Free-Range Chicken Production by Ms. Maribeth Ladu-an and Mr. Jaypee Na-ooy; Food Safety & GAP by Dr. Cristine B. Esnara; National Rice Awareness Month by Engr. Randy Soriano; Rice Tariffication

Law and Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund by Mr. Maximino R. Aromin, Jr. and ATI's e-Extension Program by Mr. Bongbong Buli-e and Jaila Sagpa-ey.

Based on the texters' address, the radio program reached listeners from all municipalities of Benguet; Baguio; Tinoc, Ifugao; Bauko and Sabangan, Mt. Province; and San Juan, Abra. Municipalities outside Cordillera were also reached like Bagulin, Burgos and San Gabriel, in La Union; Alaminos in Pangasinan and Kayapa in Nueva Vizcaya. Since the broadcasts were also simulcast via Facebook Live, viewers from Japan, Vietnam and UAE were also recorded.

The radio program ran from July 1, 2020 until December 9, 2020 with 20 episodes. (MRARomin)



Rain or Shine, the SOA Must Go on: Schools-on-the-Air for Apayao and Kalinga Remain on Air Amidst COVID-19

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET. Despite COVID-19 health risks, delivery of government services, particularly in agricultural extension, has to continue albeit some modifications to cope and adapt with the present pandemic. The Agricultural Training Institute (ATI), for its part, conceptualized the modified school-on-the-air (SOA) as one of its adaptation measures in response to COVID-19.

The SOA is an extension strategy where information on a particular subject, or an advocacy is disseminated through radio broadcasts.

In the case of ATI, a SOA deals with a specific set of topics for a particular period following a module or a broadcast guide. It begins with the enrollment of target participants, administration of pre-test among enrollees, followed by a launching program where representatives from the enrollees and other stakeholders gather to jumpstart the SOA. Broadcast then starts and quizzes are given on air every after a lesson or as indicated in the broadcast

guide, and finally a written exam is administered. Enrollees who passed the quizzes and the exam are then qualified to graduate from the SOA. Finally, a graduation program, usually a large crowd gathering, concludes the SOA. The ATI SOA targets at least 500 graduates for every SOA implemented.

In the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), the ATI-CAR has been running the SOA since 2013. Usually, one SOA is implemented covering one province for each year and is then moved to another province in

the succeeding year to bring the SOA to all the CAR provinces. However, with the threat of COVID-19 infection and the subsequent restrictions on large crowd gatherings, the ATI-CAR adopted strategies to implement a modified SOA. The ATI's modified SOA, while is still similar to the regular SOA in terms of implementation, has



a decreased target number of graduates from 500 to 300. The decrease in the target number of graduates was made due to the restrictions on the movement of people and other COVID-19 related prohibitions.

Moreover, the modified SOA skipped large crowd gathering activities such as the launching and graduation programs. The role of SOA coordinators from the partner local government units (LGU) in the recruitment, enrollment, administration of quizzes and exams, and monitoring of enrollees in their respective municipalities was also enhanced in the modified SOA. Agricultural extension workers and other experts from partner LGU and state colleges and universities were also tapped as resource persons for the SOA. Partner radio stations and SOA coordinators were also encouraged to share, through social media, the videos and photos of the broadcasts and of their other SOA related activities.

This year's ATI-CAR SOA cover the provinces of Apayao and Kalinga. In Apayao, the SOA promotes the Palay Check System for hybrid rice production. Rice farmers from the municipalities of Flora, Luna, Pudtol, and Sta. Marcela are the target listeners of this SOA. Hosting the SOA is the DZNO – FM 96.7 Radyo Kasaranay of the Apayao State College (ASC) – Luna Campus in Luna, Apayao. The ATI-CAR is implementing said SOA in partnership with the ASC, through its Research, Development and Extension Office, and the municipal LGU of Flora, Luna, Pudtol, and Sta. Marcela through their respective municipal agriculture offices. The SOA in Apayao started airing on August 25, 2020 and ran until November 17, 2020. It aired every Tuesday at 6-7 AM and Saturday, and Sunday from 5:00-6:00 AM to 7:00 AM. The broadcasts were also covered under Facebook live via @96.7 FM Radyo Kasaranay, and @

Ati Cordillera. A total of 357 farmers and youths/students graduated from the SOA.

Meanwhile, in the neighboring province of Kalinga, another SOA hit the airwaves covering Tabuk City and the municipality of Rizal. This SOA is one of the extension interventions under the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) of R.A. No. 11203 or the Rice Tariffication Law. Said SOA promotes the Palay Check System for inbred rice production. The ATI-CAR partnered with the DZRK 837 AM Radyo Pilipinas Tabuk, and the LGU of Rizal and Tabuk City, through their respective municipal and city agriculture offices, in running the SOA. The broadcast started on August 24, 2020 and ran until October 19, 2020. It aired every Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM. A total of 484 farmers and youths graduated from the SOA. (ACP Velasco)

Planting Rice in the Time of COVID-19: RCEF FFS on Rice Production in Kalinga Yields 550 Farmer Graduates

TABUK CITY, KALINGA. The Farmers Field Schools (FFS) on rice production for Kalinga launched on February 2020 under the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) was finally concluded on July 2020 with 550 farmer graduates amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The graduates of this dry season FFS are from the municipality of Rizal with 100 graduates from four batches, and Tabuk City with 450 graduates from 18 batches.

Under the RCEF Extension Component, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) shall provide agriculture-related training scholarship grants to local rice farmers and farmworkers or their dependents in RCEF covered provinces. One of these is the modified FFS where TESDA, through accredited Farm Schools, in coordination with ATI and concerned LGUs, will train farmers on various rice production technologies.

In Kalinga, there are five TESDA-accredited farm schools as of the first semester of 2020 namely, Clemencia Integrated Rice-Based Farm, Bacayan Rice-Based Integrated Farm, Shavcer's Farm, and Kub-ao Rice-Based Integrated Farm, in Tabuk City, and the Green Valley Farm in Rizal which hosted these FFS. Prior to becoming TESDA farm schools, the Clemencia Integrated Rice-Based Farm, Bacayan Rice-Based Integrated Farm, Shavcer's Farm, and the Green Valley Farm are also ATI-certified learning sites for agriculture (LSA), while the Kub-ao Rice-Based Integrated Farm is an ATI-certified school for practical agriculture. TESDA-Kalinga gave each of the four farm schools four batches of

FFS with 25 participants for each batch or 100 participants for each farm school except for the Clemencia Integrated Rice-Based Farm who was able to cater additional 2 FFS batches.

Despite the various COVID-19 related restrictions on crowd gathering and movement of people in Kalinga, the FFS continued through rescheduled and remedial classes and various strategies. Videos and printed materials on the FFS topics were also distributed beforehand for familiarization and advance reading. Other farm schools even provided transportation services to ferry participants to and from their area.

Some of the farm school owners shared their experience during the RCEF FFS. Honorio Clemencia, of the Clemencia Integrated Rice-Based Farm observed that "the participants prefer lectures simultaneous to actual demonstrations.

Oftentimes, we use Ilocano during the discussions to simplify topics and facilitate easier understanding among the group." Mr. Michael Lumas-i of the Bacayan Rice-Based Integrated Farm added that "the FFS gave farmers opportunities to learn and adapt new farming techniques such as using new farm machineries. It also facilitated the sharing of farming experiences among the participants. Through this, I observed that they were able to influence one another to achieve the FFS goals. Most importantly, the FFS is also an effective tool in strengthening community relations. Through these FFS, both the facilitators and the participants increased their capacity to listen to the opinion of others. Thus, through the FFS, farmers are given hope by increasing their self-confidence in farming.

Aside from LGU Agricultural Extension Workers, farm operators, and farmer leaders trained under the Training of Trainers on Inbred Rice Seed Production and Farm Mechanization last year were tapped as facilitators and resource persons for the RCEF FFS. Each batch had their designated trainer who closely facilitated their hands-on activities separately.

The FFS form part of the joint undertakings between the ATI-CAR, TESDA-Kalinga, PLGU Kalinga, and the LGUs of Tabuk City and Rizal under the RCEF Extension Component. Another set of FFS will be implemented for the 2020 wet season cropping with two additional farm schools namely, the Provincial Training Center-Kalinga in Tabuk City, and the Babalag Annayup Farm in Rizal. The Babalag Annayup Farm of Mr. Danilo Manuel is also one of the newest ATI-CAR certified LSA. (DAEstepan)



Promoting Multimodal Approach in FFS Implementation Amidst COVID-19: Farm Schools Receive ICT Equipment

TABUK CITY, KALINGA. In support to the continuous implementation of the modified season-long Farmers Field School (FFS) under the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF)-Extension Component, the Agricultural Training Institute-Cordillera Administrative Region (ATI-CAR) awarded Information Communication Technology (ICTs) tools to five farm schools in Kalinga accredited as training providers of the Program.

ICTs granted include laptops, LCD projectors, portable speakers, and printers. The Bacayan's Farm, Kub-ao's Farm, Shavcer's Farm, Green Valley Farm, and Clemencia's Farm received each of the items at the TAMPCO Inn and Training Center, Tabuk City, Kalinga on September 23, 2020. Moreover, manual seeder and grain moisture meter were given to Bacayan's Farm and Green Valley Farm which will be shared among the recipients particularly for hands-on activities and demonstrations.

The provision of ICT tools was one of the needs earlier identified by the farm schools

during a field monitoring conducted on February 3-7, 2020. The need for ICT support was then addressed through the RCEF-Enhancement of Learning Sites for Agriculture (LSAs). Moreover, with the various COVI-19 restrictions on mass gathering, this ICT equipment will help further facilitate lecture-discussions using a multimodal approach. The multi-modal approach in the implementation of the modified FFS is one of the coping mechanisms adopted in response to the COVI-19 restrictions on mass gathering. In response the farm schools assured proper handling of the equipment to further enhance the learning sessions for the farmers.

Johnny Carillo, owner of the Green Valley Farm, remarked "it's difficult to teach and convene farmers and it is even harder to change their attitudes. Thank you for giving us these tools which will aid us in convincing our farmers. Expect improved teaching sessions from us with the use of these gadgets."

FFS Resumes

Meanwhile, for the 2020 second cropping season, 16 batches or 375 enrollees are already undergoing the FFS in Kalinga. Shavcer's Farm, Clemencia's Farm, Green Valley Farm and D. B. M. Agricultural Farm accommodated two batches each with 25 trainees per batch. On the other hand, Kub-ao's Farm has 80 enrollees divided into four batches, two batches are composed of 30 trainees while the other two consist of 50 participants. Bacayan's Farm has a total of 95 enrollees similarly divided into four batches. Out of the four batches, two batches with 45 slots covered barangays Masablang and Nasgueban while the other two batches with 50 slots accommodated participants from barangays Laya and Ipil.

The 30 and 45 slots at the Kub-ao's Farm and Bacayan's Farm, respectively, were spill-over of the 2019 budget which TESDA reprogrammed into FFS scholarships. Out of this, another 80 slots were made available which were given to the TESDA Provincial Training Center-



Kalinga for implementation. For this year, 50 additional slots for each of the farm schools have already been requested and endorsed to TESDA Central Office. (DAEsteban)



Boosting Partnership in the New Normal: **ATI-CAR and BPI-NSQCS Tandem for RCEF Seed Growers' Training**

TABUK CITY, KALINGA. Underscoring the importance of quality seeds towards higher rice productivity, rice seed growers in Kalinga went through an Enhancement Course on Inbred Rice Seed Production. The course, which was implemented on September 21-24, 2020, is one of the activities under the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF)-Extension Component. After four days of intensive classroom discussions and field practice, 20 seed growers successfully received their training certificate at the TAMPCO Inn and Training Center at Tabuk City, Kalinga.

The various COVID-19 related restrictions on travel and mass gathering became a challenge during the conduct of the activity. Thus, in an effort to push through with the training, the Agricultural Training Institute-CAR (ATI-CAR) tapped the Bureau of Plant Industry-National Seed Quality Control Services (BPI-NSQCS) as co-implementer for the training.

The BPI-NSQCS, through its satellite office in Tabuk City, then facilitated the activity in close coordination with the ATI-CAR. Moreover, the training was adjusted so that all participants and majority of the speakers invited are from Kalinga who are also presently residing in the province. Hence, this limited the crossing of provincial borders

among the participants and the training management team in compliance to prevailing health protocols.

During the training's closing program ATI-CAR RCEF Focal Person Randy Soriano stressed the importance of the activity. He remarked, "despite this

pandemic, we have to push through with our interventions. This is because whatever crisis that we are going through, food production has to remain unhampered." He furthered that improved knowledge and skills on inbred rice production will help ensure high quality seeds for every rice farmer. Accordingly, the promotion and use of this are key interventions in improving productivity and profitability.

In response, Edwin Tubban, one of the participants, shared "I appreciated very much our hands-on in the field. Thank you for having this activity for us." Following through, Kalinga

Provincial Seed Coordinator Delia Gonzalo then challenged the participants to really apply the lessons gained from the training. "I hope that the new technologies we learned will transpire in the actual field," she said.

Apart from lecture-discussions, the training immersed the participants into simultaneous practical exercises such as varietal and physical purity test, germination test, moisture content determination, seed sampling and tagging, and field inspection and roguing. Meanwhile, resource persons and facilitators of the program included Jena

De Guzman and Crescinti Agluya of the BPI-NSQCS Tabuk City Satellite Office; Fidel Ramos and Andres Dela Cruz Jr. of the Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice); Delia Gonzalo, Veronica Mora, Roselda Dumayag, and Brent Martinez of PLGU-Kalinga; and retired Seed Inspector Remy Baliyao. The training forms part of the RCEF RESP Project 1: Design and Delivery of Training Programs which is generally aimed at enhancing the technical capabilities of seed growers in the RCEF covered provinces in CAR. (DAEstepan)



From a Small Seed: A Woman's Journey Towards Farming Resiliency

With all her effort, she swam against the strong current of water to find at least a thing where she can hold on to in order not to be carried away. Finally, she reached a fence and held tight. After sometime, she found herself already safe from the flood after struggling for her life. Adding to this experience from that same typhoon- the roof of their residential house was destroyed. The next thing - they are watching the stars above as they sleep without a roof for few nights.

This was just another scene Riseline recounted after another typhoon hit their farm sometime in 2018. Every time a strong rain hit the area, she thinks about her farm because it is just beside the creek making it more vulnerable to flood, crops will be destroyed and animals will be carried away. Sad to say, this scenario is becoming a normal experience to them since 2014. However, together with her husband Daniel, they have no option but to start another farming activity/ cropping process in the same area every now and then.

"Nu ada ti challenge ti panagbiyag ken didigra ti mula saan kami pulos maupay. Nu kasanu ti liday mi no kasta nga mabagyo kasjay met ti gagar mi nga mangi sayangkat ti panagbangon ti farm," says Riseline. (Every time there are challenges and calamities, we will not be discouraged.

As much as we are disheartened every after disaster (typhoon), it is the same as our eagerness to restart again.)

Riseline and her husband, Daniel started to till a small portion in the area in 1998. Seeing it a potential source of living, they slowly expanded the area.

The 2500 square farm in Imelda, Pudtol, Apayao is a certified Learning Site on Agriculture by ATI-CAR in 2016 showcasing good agricultural practices on lowland vegetable production. She is also the appointed Magsasaka Siyentista of the FITS Center Pudtol and an accredited farm school of TESDA.

Presently, the farm is not just producing lowland vegetables, but also teaching students (K-12) and farmers on GAP to include concoction preparation, safe farming, integrated farming among others.



Accordingly, it was Mr. Albert Llantada (Pudtol OMAg GAP focal then) who recommended her to apply as learning site. She was also being sent to attend trainings especially on GAP and that paved way for her to be connected with DA RFO and ATI-CAR.

"Nagtultulnog nak lang met a bilin yu, manipud municipal to national ken amin nga trainings ken ibaga yo ket iaramid weno ipatungpal mi, ken buyugan ti anus ken gadget mi nga ag asawa especially ti kararag keni Apo", added Riseline.

We (with husband) followed and applied all the learnings I got from the trainings (local to national) coupled with our hard work and prayers.

She continuously practices and advocates GAP because she believes that it is for the safety of the consumers. As young as they are (students), they should not be exposed to strong pesticides.

"I am happy to teach about GAP technologies because I also want them to know the value of planting (farming). If they have planted more aside from their home consumption, they can sell their other produce for the school

allowances of their children. I also want them to be happy and help these students and farmers to ease burden the school expenses)," she says.

"Maragsakanak unay nga mangisuro weno mang ishare ti GAP technologies kasi kayat ko ket maamwan da no kasano ti kapateg weno value ti agmula. Kaspangarigan nu nangitukit ti sobra nga pangsida da, adda ilako da piman nga pang balon ti ubbing iti mano nga aldaw. Saan ko kayat nga siyak lang ti makarikna ti ragsak. Kayat ko ket makatulong nak ti padak nga farmers ken students. Idi naragsak nakun nga agmula ken aglako lang ti ub-ubrak ngem etan ta isursurwak students ken farmers pirmi ti ragragsak kon ta mariknak ket malag anan da ti para kusina ken allowance ti ubbing."

One good thing about GAP is that Riseline learned the value of record keeping. Before, she was just contented when she has a produce to be marketed. Now that she keeps records, she can determine her expenses and sales.

Riseline is always grateful to the DA RFO, ATI-CAR, OPAg Apayao, and OMAg Pudtol for the unending assistance and support that helped them achieved what they are now. "Isunga saan kami pulos maup-upay nga mangitultuloy weno maum-uma nga mangar-arakup ti gobyerno gapuna ta sikayo nangbukel weno pakabuklan ti biyag mi", she shares (that is why we will not be discouraged to continue or get tired in embracing the government because it is the government that helped us mold our lives and become us complete.)

Riseline is an embodiment of a farmer that most farmers can relate with. Her story reflects the lives of farmers who stood the tests of times, farmers who turned challenges into opportunities to rise up again and become stronger.

She will not keep her story to herself but will continuously encourage others to keep tilling the farm and produce safe food despite the challenges. After all, she says, it is not just for the family but for the safety of the community. (JSSagpa-ey)





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