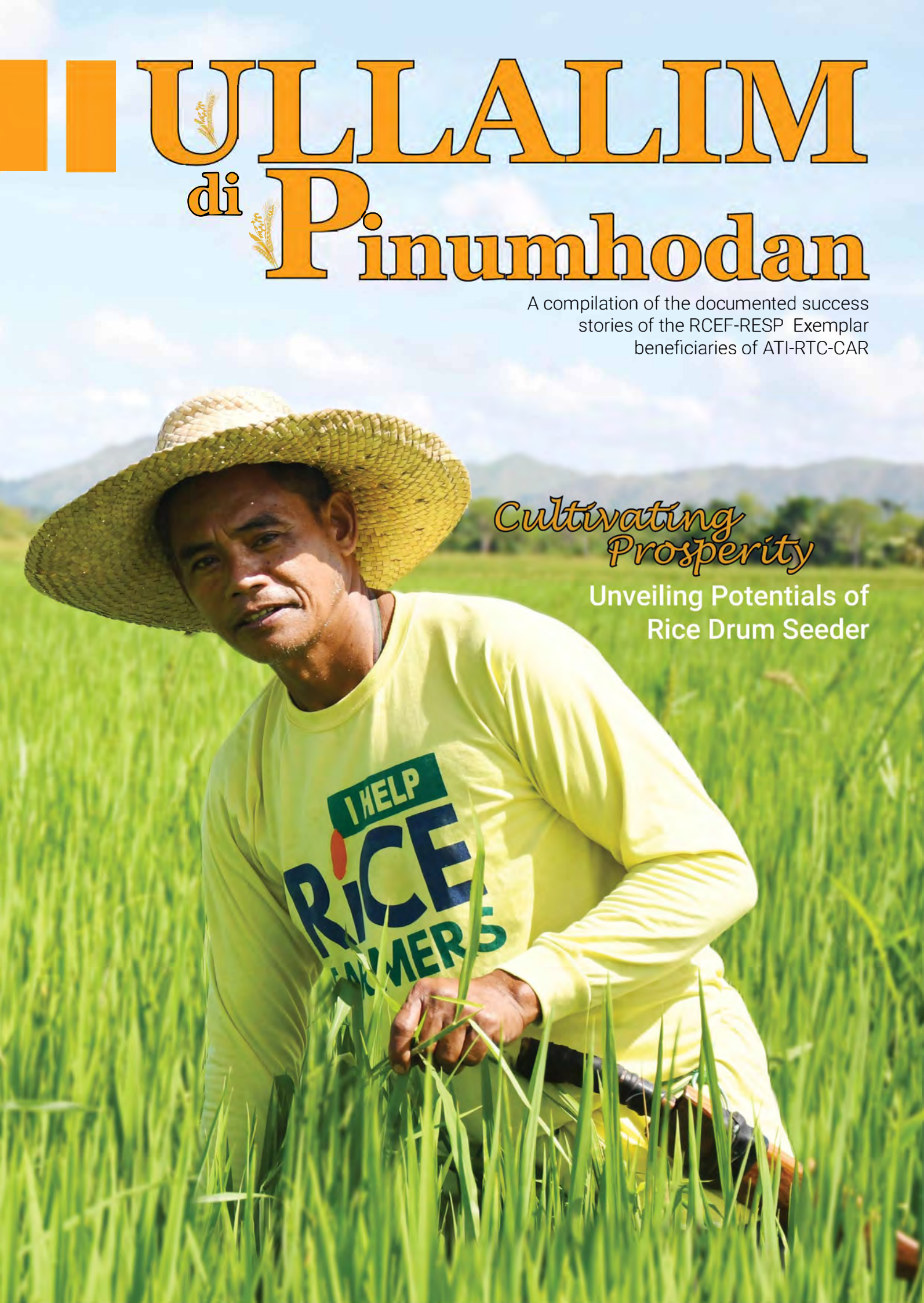
ULLALIM di Pinumhodan

A compilation of the documented success stories of the RCEF-RESP Exemplar beneficiaries of ATI-RTC-CAR



Cultivating Prosperity

Unveiling Potentials of Rice Drum Seeder

Ullalim di Pinumhodan

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AGRICULTURAL TRAINING INSTITUTE
REGIONAL TRAINING CENTER CAR (CORDILLERA ADMININSTRATIVE REGION)

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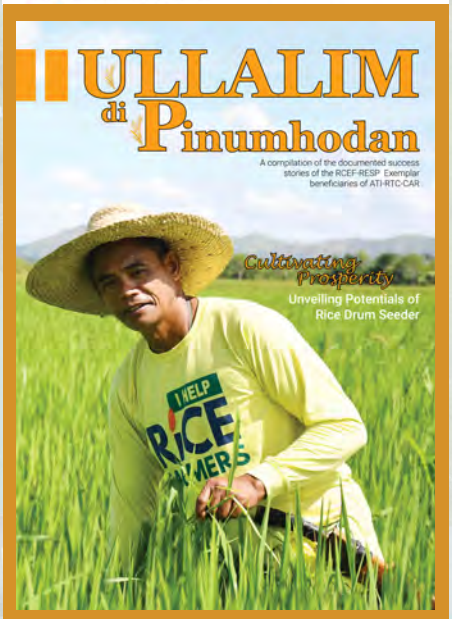

About the Cover

"Ullalim di Pinumhodan" is a combination of Ifugao and Kalinga term for "Stories of Prosperity". The title represents the content of the magazine which highlights the success, progress, and favorable developments of the RCEF -RESP exemplar beneficiaries.

Also, as the sector advocates for a more resilient and sustainable agricultural model that maximizes productivity while minimizing negative environmental impacts, a farmer from Tabuk City, Kalinga acknowledges a technology designed for efficient and precise rice planting

He is Mr. Jaime Tallongon who uses rice drum seeder which enhances the overall productivity of rice cultivation by automating the seeding process and ensuring uniform seed placement

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

CHARLIE C. SAGUDAN
Training Center Director

Greetings to our clients and stakeholders!

By 2050, The FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION (FAO) predicted that there will be shortage of food around the world. With this challenge, technological innovations, efficient ways to produce food and sustaining it is critical most importantly to third world countries without so much resources.

In the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), the RCEF program has shown promises of answering the call for food security where farmer-beneficiaries has realized better yield and income from their rice production endeavors.

This increased in yield and income emanated from farmer's diligence, industry and perseverance to follow recommended and proven practices. It's also a tribute to their dedicated partnerships with the different Government Agencies particularly the DA, PhilRice, ATI, TESDA and the LGU.

The success story you are about to read are inspiring stories, collected from various beneficiaries, providing real life experience in the field and describing how fulfilling farming could be in the light of many challenges in agriculture. The objective of this documentary write-up puts forward the government's desire for attaining food security by showcasing this program to every Filipino farmer. It hopes to gain more meaningful inspiration to farmers who continue to till the land to feed the nation. Together let us share these stories.

As Mr. Sparky-Anderson once said, "Success isn't something that just happens – success is learned, success is practiced and then it is shared."

Thank you Very much.

Rice Drum Seeder:

A farmer's pull towards higher yield

By: Jaypee D. Na-oy and Esjay M. Zausa

D*iak pati diak kita* (to see is to believe).

A line often uttered by local farmers in the face of new farming technologies. However, despite the reluctance, Mr. Jaime Tallongon opted to capitalize on various opportunities to improve his farming practices. Through his adoption of the rice drum seeder and integration of the PalayCheck System, his usual harvest of 100 cavans per hectare during the dry season increased to an average of 135 cavans per hectare.

"Narigat ti agayab ti agraep tattan, ken nu adda man ti maayaban tatta ket nangina ti singir da" (It's hard to call for farmworkers who will assist in transplanting rice seedlings nowadays, and even if there are, their charge for labor is high), Tallongon admitted. With this, his adoption of rice drum seeder significantly helped him reduce labor time and workforce requirement in his farm operations.

Mr. Tallongon was known to be the first rice farmer graduate of the Farmer Field School (FFS) who employed rice drum seeder in their community.

Mr. Tallongon in brief

Mr. Tallongon is a 52-year-old inbred rice farmer from Ipil, Tabuk City, Kalinga. He manages a one hectarage of rice farm which serves as the source of income of the family.

In 2019, he learned about Bacayan's Rice-Based Integrated Farm, which offered a free learning course on the production of high-quality inbred rice, seed certification, and farm mechanization through the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Program (RCEP). With a strong desire to stay up-to-date with new technologies and farming practices in rice cultivation, he enrolled in the course and completed various modules.

The FFS made him realized that farming is evolving overtime and innovations are changing the way farmers grow rice. After completing the training, he went back to his farm full of eagerness to employ the technologies he learned from the training. One of which is the utilization of rice drum seeder with the integration of palay check system.

This rice drum seeder is a manually operated, all metal seeders made of light gauge metal tubing. Its simple design makes its fabrication low-cost and with low power requirements. A single person can operate the seeder to enable seeding of pre-germinated rice seeds in straight rows in the field, making it easier during weeding and fertilizer application. This enables the farmer to plant seeds in rows parallel to transplanting.

At first, when they spotted him pulling the two wheeled orange barrels in the rice field, other farmers poke fun of him. More so when the rice seeds had already begun to sprout revealing a wider spacing contrary to the usual practice. "Sayang dagita bakante nga spaces" (those unused spaces, not utilized are such a waste), they would quip.

> **"Nu nasedsed ti panag mula ket ulmogen gayam" (if the planting is dense, it increases number of planthoppers)"**
>
> he said.

Despite this, he continued using the technology. The drum seeder allowed him to plant in straight rows following the recommended planting distance of rice. As proven by the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), following this proper spacing can increase the yield by 25–40% over improper spacing.

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Now, his neighbors started asking how he did it - some are asking why his crop is planted in straight rows. When people asked him, he shows a video of him using the drum seeder. More and more farmers became curious about the technology and some of his neighbors have already started adopting the drum seeder when sowing seeds.

Usual vs. changed practice

Like most of the farmers, Mr. Tallongon learned his farming practices from his parents. "No anya dagidiay nakitkitak ken insursuro dagiti nagannak ko idi iti panagtalon ket isu en ti sinursorot ko nga wagas" (my practices in rice farming are combination of what my parents taught me and what other farmers in the community have been doing), he shared.

Since then, he has followed a seeding rate of six bags or 120 kilograms for his one hectare rice farm Also, he deploys five man per day to assist him in his farm works. Both the seeding rate practice and labor requirement incurred him a total cost of P7,450.00. Such practice has been the traditional way of most farmers in their area. In his mind, the more seeds sown the more the harvest. However, comparing to what he was taught, his seeding rate is twice as much as the recommended amount of 20-40 kilograms per hectare for transplanted or 40-60kg per hectare for direct wet seeded rice.

"Idi nalpas ti training ket kunak nga ipadas koman diay naisuro kanyami. Isunga napan ko kinasao ni maam Lumas-i ta no bulodek wenno rentaak diay drum seeder. Ket diay pinagsabay ko diay drum seeder ken diay keycheck nga naisuro." (After the training, I decided to try and employ the technologies taught to us. I decided to talk to Ma'am Lumas-i to borrow or rent their drum seeder. I used the drum seeder and also integrated the key checks taught), Mr. Tallongon recalled.

He tried to lessen his seeding rate with 3 bags or 60 kilograms. From five, he only deployed three people to assist him in his rice field. This allowed him to incur an amount of P3,950.00 pesos only allowing him to save an average amount of P3,500.00 per hectare for seeding rate and labor.

Previously, he relied solely on estimations and hearsay from fellow farmers to determine the type, quantity, and timing of fertilizer application, resulting in an average expense of P11,620.00 per cropping season for four bags of 14-14-14, three bags of 16-20-0, and three bags of 46-0-0 fertilizers. However, after adopting the PalayCheck System's recommendations, he reduced his use of fertilizers. Based on the system's advice, he lowered his application of triple 14 fertilizer from four to three bags, and two bags each for 16-20-0 and urea. As a result, he was able to decrease his fertilizer application cost to P3,480.00 while still providing sufficient nutrients to achieve the crop's yield potential."

Uptake payoffs

"Idi naipadas kon met ketdi piman day technology nga naisuro ket adda nagbaliwan

“Money saved from the production cost is a great help to finance other family expenses and my children’s school expenses” states Jaime Tallongon

na diay apit ken kita mi. Dakkel nga tulong metlang diay panagbawas ko ti i-apaplay ko nga fertilizer diay panangbawas ko iti bin-i ken diay strikto nga panangbantay idiay pagay tano makita no adda nga dagos ti napeste wenno natamaan iti dadduma nga sakit.” (When I applied the technologies introduced to us, our yield and income increased. Lessening my fertilizer application and seeding rate was a big help. Also, strict monitoring of the rice field is very essential to early detect pest and disease infestation).

In his traditional practice, Mr. Tallongon only accumulates a net income of Php 35,500.00 pesos during dry season and Php 14,500.00 pesos on wet season giving him an annual net income of 50,000.00 pesos.

During the dry season, Mr. Tallongon can harvest an average of 100 cavans per hectare, with each cavan weighing at least 50 kilograms. Selling at P15.00 per kilogram, he earns a gross income of P75,000.00. Meanwhile, in the wet season, he can harvest an average of 90 cavans per hectare (with the same weight per cavan) sold at 12 pesos per kilogram, giving him a gross income of P54,000.00. However, to produce these yields, he spends an inclusive cost of farm inputs, labor, pesticides, and other materials amounting to P39,500 per cropping season

Upon the integration of the technology, there was a noticeable change in yield and income. He was able to harvest 135 cavans sold at P16.00 per kilogram during the dry season; and 150 cavans sold at P14.50 per kilogram during the wet season. His production expense amounted to Php 37,220.00 and P35,720.00 for dry and wet season, respectively giving him an annual income of P122,060.

In addition, the water management that he learned through the FFS greatly contributed to his success in lessening his production cost. He said that following proper water management solved problems on snails and weeds therefore eliminating additional labor and inputs in controlling this problem.

The increased income after the training is attributed to high yield through use of certified seeds from RCEF, reduction of cost from fertilizers, reduction of labor and seeding rate for the use of drum seeder technology and higher selling price of fresh palay.

Jaime has been continually using drum seeder for almost three years while unconsciously changing perspectives within his community.//

Cultivating Dreams:

A Professor's Path to Embracing Farming as a Passion

By: Jaypee D. Na-oy and Esjay M. Zausa

From the paddies to the lecture halls, Bayed's story traces its root back into farming. It was farming that sustained his family needs and it was the same endeavor that earned him a degree in Forestry. He was a tender of the land during his childhood years and still is up to the present time.

Banking on hard work, Bayed is successfully managing three hectares of rice seed production area while simultaneously serving as a college dean and as a resource speaker in two RCEF Learning Sites for Agriculture in Rizal, Kalinga.

"Maragsakanak nga mangibingbingay kadagidiay kaamuwak iti kapagayan, nangnangruna no makitkitak ngay nga tultuladen da met," (It is my joy to impart my knowledge on rice farming especially when I see that these are being emulated).
Mr. Bayed was a graduate of the Training of Trainers (TOT) on Production of High-Quality Inbred Rice and Seeds, and Farm Mechanization. This training equipped him with valuable knowledge on various technologies which are continually being integrated into his own farming practices and are being passed on to neighboring farmers as well.

A journey towards becoming

Before venturing into seed production, Victorino Bayed engaged in traditional rice farming, cultivating crops for both personal consumption and the market. His awareness of the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF),

implemented through RA 11203, also known as the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL), and its various component programs sparked his interest. Inspired by this knowledge, he proactively contacted Mr. Nasser Rey Juan of OMAG-Rizal, expressing his eagerness to participate in any training programs organized within their municipality.

In 2019, Mr. Bayed initially participated in Training of Trainers (TOT) focused on the Production of High-Quality Inbred Rice and Seeds, and Farm Mechanization. A few months later, he received another invitation for the Inbred Rice Seed Production and Certification Training Program, designed for potential seed growers. This was organized by DA-ATI-RTC-CAR in collaboration with DA-RFO-CAR, PhilRice and BPI-NSQCS.

The training played a pivotal role in Mr. Bayed's journey towards becoming a successful seed producer. Shortly after completing the training program and satisfying all the necessary requirements of the BPI-NSQCS, he acquired a certification as a seed grower.

This achievement not only validated his diligence but also qualified him to actively participate in the RCEF production and distribution of high-quality seeds. Through his collaboration with the Matagoan Agriculture Cooperative, Mr. Bayed was able to contribute to the production and distribution of these premium seeds which further fortified his role as a key player in the agricultural sector in his own community.

Farming served as a stress reliever for Mr. Bayed particularly when he sees his crops growing abundantly. He set aside time in the morning and in the afternoon, outside of his class session, to visit his fields and nurture his crops.

"Ngem syempre no seed producer ka masapol nga kitaem nga nakacomply ka ediay quality ti seed nga iprodproduce mo. Dapat no seed producer ka nalinis diay talon mo, tapno masiguradok day kinalinis na, paspasyarek dayta talon ko kada alas siyete ti agsapa sakbayak nga agreport ditoy eskwelaan ken ti malem no malpas ti office hours. (But of course, as a seed producer, it is essential for you to ensure compliance with the quality standards of seed you produce. As a seed producer, you must keep your fields clean to guarantee its cleanliness. I personally inspect my fields every day at seven in the morning, right after reporting to the school and in the afternoon after office hours).

Accordingly, prior to the TOT, Mr. Bayed implemented proper care and maintenance for his seedlings. However, he faced challenges concerning the timing of fertilizer application as well as managing pest and disease on his rice crops. He would apply fertilizer whenever he wanted and would occasionally spray insecticides whenever he saw his neighbors doing so.

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After the training, he learned to apply the three Rs of fertilizer application: Right Timing, Right Amount, and Right Element.

Moreover, he integrated the appropriate planting distance for his rice seedlings in his seed production. During the wet season, he followed a 20 by 20 planting distance, while during the dry season, he adopted a 15 by 20 planting distance. Mr. Bayed stressed that achieving a high yield goes beyond simply considering the number of seedlings per tiller. He highlighted the crucial role of PalayCheck System, a holistic and well-rounded approach to agricultural practices in order to achieve desired results.

With the integration of the Palay Check System, Mr. Bayed witnessed significant improvements in his seed production. In his personal experience, he achieved a minimum net income of P100,000.00 per cropping season in one hectare of land, depending on effective farm management. Across his three hectares of farmland, his average income ranged from P300, 000 to 400,000.

As a result of this achievements, Mr. Bayed was able to acquire a brand-new car, which he now utilizes for various purposes, including facilitating farming operations and attending his personal work engagements. The car serves as a valuable asset in supporting his efforts and in providing efficient transportation for both his agricultural responsibilities and other commitments.

Furthermore, Mr. Bayed wisely allocated a portion of his income to support his children's education, enabling them to pursue higher education in prestigious institutions such as the University of the Philippines Los Baños and a university in Australia. This displays his dedication to their academic success and his belief in the transformative power of education.

Trainee turned trainer

Mr. Bayed's journey as a trainer started with the encouragement of Mr. Johnny Carillo, farm operator of the Green Valley Learning Site for Agriculture (LSA). Mr. Carillo inspired him to realize the importance of sharing his knowledge, techniques, and experiences gained from his Training of Trainers (ToT) program especially to farmers confined to traditional farming practices.

For 2019-2020, he actively served as trainer at the DBM Agricultural Farm School and Greenvalley

Farm Schools, imparting his expertise to hundreds of rice farmers focused on the PalayCheck System and Farm Mechanization. Throughout this experience, he discovered a profound sense of comfort and excitement in interacting with fellow farmers fueling his dedication to continually serve as a trainer.

"Ken as regards idiay panag assist tayo idiay LSA's apapan tayo idiay no adda waya tayo tapno makaibingay tayo kadagidiay nadumaduma a wagas a rumbeng a masurot no agtaltalon tayo. Ken mayat metlang ta makaim-impluwensiya tayo ta syempre dagidiay isursurok kenyada ket adda makitkita da nga pruweba idiay farm ko sunga handa nga makwestyunaran diay ibagbagak. (Regarding our assistance in the LSAs, we should be present whenever possible to provide guidance to the farmers who are genuinely eager to learn and improve their farming practices. It is essential that we make a positive impact and influence them through the knowledge and evidence we present from our own farms, so that they will be ready to accept the advice I offer without questioning it.)"

As a trainer, he prioritizes ensuring that participants fully grasp the knowledge he shares. During his sessions, he consistently reminds them not to fear trying out new techniques or innovations that could potentially contribute to higher yields and increased income.

Through his proactive approach and commitment to continuous learning, Victorino Bayed embarked on a transformative journey that directed him from being a traditional rice farmer into a certified seed producer and trainer. His dedication to staying informed and actively seeking opportunities for growth has been instrumental in his success.

"Maysa lang met ti mangmotmotivate kanyak nga mangituloy ditoy araramidek a kas trainer ket diay makitak ngay nga araramiden da diay maisursuro kenyada. Tapos agsubli da kanyak nga isistoryaen da diay increase idiay apit da ket nagmayat lang nga dengen. Ket idiay kametten a makapanonot a through diay assistance mo ket pimmintas diay apit da,"(There is one thing that motivates me to continue what I am doing; it is when I see those participants applying what I have taught them. When they come back to me and share the improvements in their yield, it brings me great joy. It is in these moments that I realize the impact of my assistance and how it positively affects their outcomes.) Bayed ended.//

2019

The implementation of the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund-Rice Competitiveness Extension Program (RCEP) of ATI-RTC-CAR has been a dynamic and transformative journey, marked by a series of strategic initiatives aimed at bolstering collaboration and skill development within the rice industry.

For four years of implementation, the ATI-RTC-CAR has poured dedication, excellence, and commitment in the operation with significant achievements.

It is through resiliency that the center was able to implement its targets beyond boundaries, and it is through a strong social partnership that the center was able to remain relevant amidst the industrialization we faced. And through this partnership the network was able to implement the various programs:

Through the years:

By: Esjay Zausa

In 2019, the initiatives under the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Program (RCEP), emphasized collaboration and strategic planning among stakeholders.

The Consultative Meeting and Planning Workshop aim to align extension and communication plans, discussing the Rice Tarrification Law and formulating action plans for enhanced extension activities. It serves as a proactive platform to identify and address issues, fostering unified efforts for RCEP's success.

The Information Caravan, conducted in four batches with 868 participants, facilitated collaboration and harmonization of extension plans through discussions on the Rice Tarrification Law.

On this year, Basic Training Course for Inbred Rice Seed Production and Certification for Farmers with 31 participants and the two batches of Training of Trainers on Inbred Rice Seed Production and Farm Mechanization with 69 participants were conducted.

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Walking Towards Mechanization:

The Emily Palad's Trail to Sustainable Rice Production with Walk-Behind Transplanter

By: Jaypee D. Na-oy and Esjay M. Zausa

> "To be better than I used to be not to be better than anyone else"

claims Emily Palad on continuously utilizing walk-behind transplanter in her one-hectare rice paddies.

Venturing to new technologies, Ms. Palad was able to accumulate at least 43 percent increase in her rice production. Since 2020, she consistently used walk behind transplanter in the operation of her rice fields. Aside from the machinery, she also integrates crop establishment, palay key checks one (1) to eight (8), water saving technology, integrated pest management and conducts Agro-Ecosystem Analysis. These practices still don't limit her to explore other good practices that would help her attain a higher yield and income.

Transitioning to modern type of farming was a little bit challenging on her part since she got to hear a lot of criticisms from her neighbors. "There are times that my neighbors would laugh at me, and sometimes older generations scold me since they observed that my spacing per hill is too wide, telling me that I am wasting the spaces of my fields".

True enough, she still decided to implement what she learned during the Farmer Field School since she knew that this would benefit her.

Her farming expedition

Ms. Emily Palad is a 45-year-old rice farmer from Maledda, Ipil, Tabuk City, Kalinga. A graduate of BS Commerce who manages a one hectare of rice field which helps provide her family their day-to-day needs.

After finishing her bachelor's degree, she wasn't able to land a job both in a government and private agency for she has to take care of her family. She is a full-time mother and at the same time assists her husband in their farm activities which kicked off her farming journey.

"I decided to continue farming uray nu adda trabaho ni lakay ko idiay NIA (National Irrigations Administration) ta diay sweldo na ket mapan iti tuition dagiti ubbing ken mausar dagiti dadduma a kasapulan iti uneg ti balay. Kas maysa nga asawa ket isu met iti contribution ko kanyana tapnu haan koma nga amin nga kanen ket gatangen, isu nga adda metlang bassit nga garden ko nga pangalaan iti nateng. (I pursued farming

even if my husband is currently employed at the NIA to assist him with some of our family needs since his monthly income will only be good for the tuition fee of our children and some for household needs. As a wife, I thought of supporting my husband by doing home gardening to provide food for our family and at the very least we won't be buying everything at the market".

The one-hectare land is entrusted to her husband's family in 2003. Since then, her husband handled all farm activities. Her responsibilities as a wife and mother is to do the chores and look after their kids.

In 2019, her husband got the opportunity to work at National Irrigation Administration (NIA) as a welder. With the good work opportunity, it was Ms. Emily who took charge of their rice farm. Back then, farming practice is based on observations and testimonies of other farmers.
With her passion and eagerness to improve her agricultural knowledge and skills and be informed about the latest technologies and farming techniques in rice cultivation, she looked for free trainings and learning courses that would suffice her need. Luckily, she got a family friend, Mrs. Angie Lumas-i, operator of Bacayan's Integrated Farm School that offers a free learning course on producing high-quality inbred rice under Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Program (RCEP).

With this, in the second semester of 2019, she was invited by her friend to attend the said learning course, without any doubt she accepted the offer.
The Farmer Field School is designed to train farmers on various topics such as pest and disease management, soil fertility and water resource management, local varietal selection and purification, farm mechanization, marketing, record keeping, and financial literacy.

Learnings as an investment for a brighter opportunity

Participating in the FFS opened her eyes to the ever-budding nature of farming and how technologies are reforming rice cultivation. Brimming with enthusiasm, she decided to adopt and implement the cutting-edge technologies she had learned. Ms. Palad adopted the walk-behind transplanter, integrated crop establishment, palay key checks one to eight, water saving technology, integrated pest management and conducted Agro-Ecosystem Analysis (AESA).

"Idi nagusarak ti transplanter ket adu met ti nagsayaatan na. Nalaklaka ti panagabono,

Continued on Next Page

panag-spray ta adda space a pagnaan nga awan ti madadael mu nga mula. Ken napansin ko nga mas mayat diay naimula a nausar ti transplanter ta awan unay ti ulmog na ta mayat gayam nu nalawag ken adda iti pagrikusan ti angin iti aglawlaw ti mula ta haan a pagbalayan ti ulmog wenno plant hopper. (When I used the walk-behind transplanter, it provided me with lots of benefits. It facilitated the easy application of fertilizers and pesticides. I also noticed that implementing wider spacing effectively prevented our crops from being attacked by brown plant hoppers and impeded their ability to establish habitats between the hills)."

Seedlings that are transplanted using a transplanter recover more quickly than seedlings that are manually planted, she added.

On her traditional practice, she uses a 55 kg of seeds in her one-hectare rice field, but after the FFS, her seeding rate decreased to 40 kilograms.

Also, the course gave her knowledge on the proper fertilizer application. In fertilizer application it is important to apply this "EAT", where E stands

for applying the right ELEMENT, A for the right AMOUNT and T for the right TIMING. All these three (3) should be considered when applying fertilizers which are important in specific growth phases.

Before the training, Ms. Palad has recorded an average harvest of 215 bags of fresh palay weighing 50 kilograms each for two cropping seasons. She was able to achieve a gross income of P172,000.00. However, the expenses incurred throughout the year in her rice production venture amounted to a significant sum of ₱80,000.00. These expenses were on fertilizers, pesticides, insecticides, and seeds. A notable portion, equivalent to 27.5 percent of the total expense, was allocated towards compensating laborers involved in the task of pulling and transplanting rice seedlings.

Additionally, 32 percent of the total expense covered land preparation and harvesting fees. Despite the initial success, the net income for the year (two croppings) amounted to only P92,000.00.

Ms. Palad's adoption of transformative technologies and innovative methods through the FFS, resulted to a remarkable change in rice yield and income. After attending the course, her gross income increased to P196,000.00, accompanied by a substantial decrease in farm expenses, amounting to P64,000.00.

The adoption of a mechanical transplanter, specifically the walk-behind transplanter, played a crucial role in reducing operational expenses and maximizing profitability for Ms. Palad. By utilizing the walk-behind transplanter for efficient transplanting, she was able to significantly decrease several production expenses, including labor, fuel, and land preparation, while also experiencing an increase in yields.

The integration of the walk-behind transplanter into her farming practices resulted in a streamlined and more cost-effective transplanting process, reducing the need for manual labor. This reduction in labor costs, coupled with the optimization of fuel usage and the efficient preparation of the land, contributed to the overall reduction in operational expenses.

Consequently, the combination of increased yields and savings in farm expenses allowed Ms. Palad to achieve an impressive net income of P132,000.00. The adoption of the walk-behind transplanter not only led to a significant boost in productivity but also had a direct impact on reducing costs associated with pesticides, fertilizers, and labor.

"No adda ti makita ti kakadwa a farmers nga i-ad-adopt mo a technology ediay farm mo ket adda nga adda ti maibaga da. Haan nga maiwasan dayta. Ti farmer ngamin ket nu anya ti indak dakkelan da nga pamay-an ti panagtalon ket isu ti epapati da nga aramiden (When encountering farmers who have yet to embrace new agricultural technologies, they always seem to have something to say. It is inevitable. Majority of farmers in our community still adhere to traditional farming practices, as it is what they have been implementing for a long time)."

Farmers usually adopt innovations when they have seen excellent outcomes from other farmers who have been using the technology. Ms. Palad shared,

"I, too, had my doubts at first with the planting distance and the lesser number of seedlings per hill, but I chosed to give it a try."

The fear of being criticized motivated her to better manage and improve her farm.

Ms. Palad encourages her fellow farmers to try employing and benefit from rice farm machineries, which was developed to lower their production costs and increase their productivity and profitability.//

As we aim for a rice-sufficient country, let us not stop learning and continue to embrace new technology

states Michael Johnson Mabalo after graduating Farmers Field School at J and E Integrated Farm.

Embarked with a tale of resilience, education, and perseverance, Mr. Mabalo was able to transition his profession from a line man of a certain electric cooperative to a successful farmer. Realizing the impact of farming on the attainment of his degree, in 2017 he decided to file a resignation in the company he was engaged with and decided to do a full-time job in their own farm. Mabalo's successful completion of his academic degree in Electrical Engineering is credited to the evolving power of agriculture, as it was made possible through the income his family generated from farming.

"At first narigat ta kasla ka agrugi manen, ngem no medyo bumayag ket maisanay mon ket idiay kanto manen malakaan. Ken no makitam dagidiay pagay mo nga mayat ti rubwat na ket makapabang-ar. (At first, the transition was challenging, but with time, you will find it easier. Additionally, witnessing your rice crop flourishing brings a sense of fulfillment and contentment)."

The transition from his career enabled him to have quality time with his family and community. Through farming, he was able to manage his

FROM LINES TO FIELDS

A Farmer's Journey of Innovation and Resilience

By: Esjay M. Zausa and Jaypee D. Na-oy

own time and dedicated his service to their community by being a farmer leader of the San Quintin Integrated Association.

A Journey to Learning

It was during the first semester of 2022, when he joined the training course on production of high-quality inbred rice seed certification and farm mechanization. For almost five years, he was practicing the traditional ways of rice farming in his own field. After the learning course, he was able to benchmark various technologies which increased his yield and income in rice production.

"Idi 2022 ket naikkanak iti gundaway nga agatendar ti daytoy a learning course ket ado iti naisuro da a wagas a mabalin a maiplementar ti panagtalon. Adda kadta a nadumaduma nga innovation, from traditional to mechanization, dagitay nutrient management a dakel a nakatulong kadakami a manalon. (In 2022, I was given the chance to join the learning course, through this course we were able to learn various innovations that are applicable in rice farming, from traditional farming to mechanization, nutrient management which greatly benefitted us rice farmers in the locality)."

After the learning course, he joined the Rice Specialist Training Course organized by Department of Agriculture-PhilRice-Isabela. The Rice Specialist Training Course is designed to provide participants with comprehensive knowledge and skills related to rice production, management, and technology. The training aims to enhance the capabilities of individuals involved in the rice industry, such as farmers, extension workers, agronomists, and other agricultural professionals.

Continued on Next Page

"Joining various training courses provided me with in-depth knowledge about rice production techniques, the prevailing agricultural practices, and some of the latest technologies which are applicable in my field. Applying my learnings about best practices in rice production, resulted an increase in yield and improved the quality of my grains", he added

Transformation

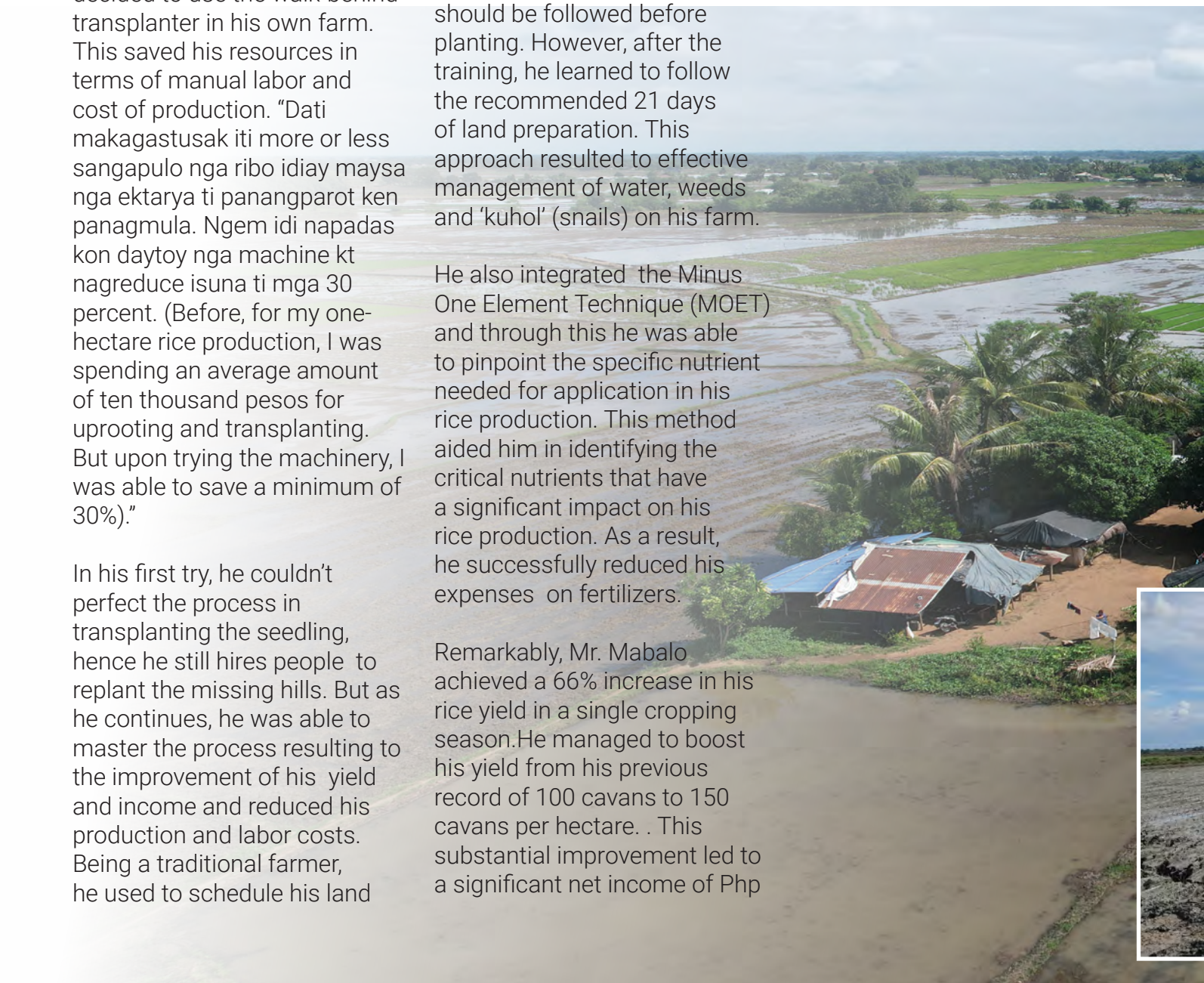
With the excitement he felt after the learning course, he decided to use the walk-behind-transplanter in his own farm. This saved his resources in terms of manual labor and cost of production. "Dati makagastusak iti more or less sangapulo nga ribo idiay maysa nga ektarya ti panangparot ken panagmula. Ngem idi napadas kon daytoy nga machine kt nagreduce isuna ti mga 30 percent. (Before, for my one-hectare rice production, I was spending an average amount of ten thousand pesos for uprooting and transplanting. But upon trying the machinery, I was able to save a minimum of 30%)."

In his first try, he couldn't perfect the process in transplanting the seedling, hence he still hires people to replant the missing hills. But as he continues, he was able to master the process resulting to the improvement of his yield and income and reduced his production and labor costs. Being a traditional farmer, he used to schedule his land preparation based on water availability, unaware that there is a minimum duration that should be followed before planting. However, after the training, he learned to follow the recommended 21 days of land preparation. This approach resulted to effective management of water, weeds and 'kuhol' (snails) on his farm.

He also integrated the Minus One Element Technique (MOET) and through this he was able to pinpoint the specific nutrient needed for application in his rice production. This method aided him in identifying the critical nutrients that have a significant impact on his rice production. As a result, he successfully reduced his expenses on fertilizers.

Remarkably, Mr. Mabalo achieved a 66% increase in his rice yield in a single cropping season.He managed to boost his yield from his previous record of 100 cavans to 150 cavans per hectare. . This substantial improvement led to a significant net income of Php 40,000.00 to Php 50,000.00 in just one cropping season.

"Uray no kastoy nga adda ti mayat nga apit wenno medyo ngimmato bassit ti apit ko ket haanak ladta sumardeng nga agadal ti baro a technology wenno technique tapno ti kasta ket mabalin ko pay a mapangato ti apit ko wenno mapamayat toy pagtalonak. Ta ammoyo garud through learning ket iso ti mangpamayat ti masakbayan iti maysa nga tao. (Despite achieving an increase in yield, my motivation to continuously learn remains unwavering. I strive to acquire new technologies and techniques to further enhance my yield and improve efficiency.



Learning gives us a better future)."
With his participation to different trainings and other activities he was able to adopt the establishment of light trap as a means to manage insects on his farm, particularly during the heading stage of the rice crop. This practice proved to be beneficial as it allowed Mr. Mabalo to identify the types of insects present in his farm.

Moving Forward

In response to the increased occurrence of El Niño in their community, he opted to embrace the alternate wetting and drying technique to his farm. This method, employed in rice production, entails periodically allowing the soil to dry out before re-flooding the field.

"Kas makitak, napintas ti farming nangnangruna no makitam dagidiay barbaro nga innovations a makatulong a mangpangato iti apit. Isunga para kanyak importante latta ti learning enya, maipakat latta isuna in terms ti farming. Isunga kayat ko lang man nga i-encourage dagitoy kakadwak a farmers ta no adda opportunity nga umay kenyada, dagidiay trainings, learning course ken no ada iti maintroduce nga baro a technology ket i-grab tayo latta nga igrab. Haan tayo koma nga agbuteng ta dayta ti maysa nga pakaalaan ti adal. (Farming is a great venture especially when we witness various innovative practices that can help improve our yield. Learning is important to me, and we apply it in farming. I encourage my fellow farmers to attend trainings and other learning courses to learn new technologies offered. Let us not be afraid of trying new things and new experiences)."

With the ever-changing scenarios, Mr. Mabalo said that farmers should adapt for it also opens windows of opportunities which is not only for personal growth but also contributing to the development in our own unique ways. //

2020

Through the years:

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One of the objective of the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Program (RCEP) is to empower farmers and seed growers with comprehensive knowledge and skills through series of impactful training sessions and information caravans.

In this year, the continuation of the Information Caravan conducted in four batches was focused on enabling farmers to articulate the background and purpose of the Rice Tarrification Law (RTL) and RCEP. Participants learned to enumerate requirements for accessing machines, credit, inbred seeds, scholarships, and training, while also providing a platform to voice personal issues and concerns for documentation.

The Enhancement Course on Inbred Rice Seed Production for Seed Growers was conducted to update the knowledge and skills of seed growers.

The Training of Trainers on Modernized Production of High-Quality Inbred Rice and Seeds, and Farm Mechanization, conducted in two batches, focused on empowering participants to implement the Modified Season-long Farmer Field School effectively. The training covered articulating RCEF and its components, discussing the rice industry situation, explaining the PalayCheck System for inbred rice seed production, and enhancing training management and financial skills.

The School on the Air (SOA) on RCEF and Inbred Rice Production Using PalayCheck System as a Guide provides participants with the knowledge to improve rice production and management practices, including insights into hybrid rice production. Topics covered include the Philippines Rice Industry, the genesis of RCEF, the four components of RCEF, the nine KeyChecks of the PalayCheck System, various parts of a rice plant and its growth stages, seed testing methods, and laboratory standards. Participants also gained an understanding of farm planning, budgeting, record-keeping, and ICT applications for rice production.

These initiatives collectively contributed to the overarching goal of RCEF, fostering knowledge exchange, skill development, and effective implementation of strategies to enhance the competitiveness and sustainability of the rice industry in the Philippines.

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RAVAN
TIVENESS
T FUND

In the stretch of rice paddies in the municipality of Alfonso Lista, Ifugao lies an individual who wears multiple hats with unwavering dedication - meet Ms. Kathryn T. Baroga.

More than just a rice farmer, she assumes roles as a trainer, facilitator, and a certified seed grower, embodying a deep commitment to her craft. Her journey of cultivation and growth where the seeds of knowledge she sowed have flourished into abundant yields. Despite holding a degree in BS Physical Therapy, she still decided to immerse herself in the realm of agriculture. To her, farming is not just a mere livelihood but a legacy to live. At an early age, she saw the potentials in rice farming and its ability to sustain her family's needs. This motivated her to join various learning courses that would benefit her and her rice paddies which paved her way to become an adept mentor in the field of agriculture.

"Participating in trainings greatly benefitted me ta nagadayo diay kursok iti ar aramidek tatta, ediay ak nga nakaadal a talaga ta na i-apply ko ediay talon ko dagiti naadal ko, ta ti ammuk lang idi ket nu tyempo ti panagapiten. (Participating to trainings greatly helped me in my farming journey for I am not a graduate of agriculture, through the trainings attended I was able to benchmark various innovations which I am now applying in my own farm)."

Her learning process

Due to some painful and unexpected eventin their family, in 2020 she was forced to take over the operation of their 5 hectarage rice farm. It is in this year where she started her journey as a seed grower. Through farming she was able

to provide the basic needs of her family and the educational expenses of her two children.

Recognizing her limited knowledge and skills in farming she eagerly searched for various learning courses that would capacitate her.

In 2020, she participated in the Farmer Field School (FFS) on the production of high-quality inbred rice, seed certification, and farm mechanization conducted by Jacob's Farm, a Learning Site for Agriculture of the Department of Agriculture-Agricultural Training Institute-Cordillera Administrative Region (DA-ATI-RTC-CAR) and an accredited farm school of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) in Alfonso Lista, Ifugao.

A year after she was given the opportunity to join in the Training of Trainers on production of high-quality inbred rice, seed certification, and farm mechanization conducted by the ATI-CAR, through the two-learning course, she gained profound understanding and obtained hands-on skills relating to rice production. Also, it equipped her with a holistic understanding of producing high-quality inbred rice, seed certification procedures, and farm mechanization methods. The knowledge gained empowered her to contribute to the advancement of agricultural practices and the overall improvement of rice farming systems.

New avenue of learning and knowledge enhancement opened for her when she had the privilege to attend the Rice Specialist Training Course organized by PhilRice-Isabela. This specialized course focuses on equipping participants with advanced technical and decision-making skills related to rice and rice-based production technologies.

The training program also prepared them to become resource persons and facilitators for various RCEF training programs.

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Empowered Woman in Agriculture

Kathryn T. Baroga's Journey from Fields to Facilitation and Beyond

By: Esjay M. Zausa and Jaypee D. Na-oy

Revolutionizing Rice Farming

The training helped her recognized that some of her practices in rice production needs to be corrected. She mentioned that there is a substantial reduction in their seeding rate, dropping from 120 kilograms to 40 kilograms per hectare.

Often, they usually follow closely spaced planting believing that a higher number of planted seedlings would yield greater harvests. “Ti ammu mi gamin ket nu ad adu ti imula nga puon ket ad adu met ton ti apiten (Before, what we believed is that the higher the seeds planted, the higher also is the yield).”

However, after the training, she came to understand that the practice done leads to fewer tillers due to intensified competition for resources like fertilizer and sunlight. Such spacing encourages conditions favorable for insect population growth.
“Dati ket uray al aldawan wennu kapudpudotan t panawen ket ag apply kami ladta ti abono, saan mi nga ammu nga nalaka gayam nga mapukaw ti abono nu napudot ti panawen (Before, we apply fertilizers at the middle of the day without realizing that fertilizers applied in daylight easily evaporates).” Rice plant needs essential elements to grow and meet its potential yield but using excessive fertilizer contributes to environmental pollution. Fertilizers that volatilize accumulates at the atmosphere which contributes to global warming.

Kathryn also affirms the accuracy of the recommendation of Key check number five which is on average, approximately 4,000 liters of water must be provided (through rainfall and/or irrigation) to a rice field in order to yield 1 kilogram of rice. However, with effective field management, the requirement can be reduced to around 2,600 liters of water. Upon implementation, she noticed that her crops thrive even during periods when her field doesn’t have a continuous water supply.

With the high cost of inputs, particularly fertilizers, she was relieved to learn the application of Leaf Color Chart (LCC). Recognizing the crucial role of nitrogen (N) fertilizer in rice production, she emphasized the significance of split application of N fertilizer throughout the growth period of rice to adequately supply the crop’s nitrogen requirements on its critical growth stages. She highlighted that the use of LCC guarantees the right amount of nitrogen, consequently preventing the excessive application of nitrogen and subsequently reducing the expenses on fertilizer inputs.

Incorporating all the knowledge she gained and the good practices she has been practicing, Kathryn confidently shared that her crop yield has shown a consistent increase, averaging between 15 to 20 bags per hectare.

Empowering farmers as a trainer and facilitator

Driven by her enthusiasm to help her fellow farmers, she assumes role as trainer at J and E Integrated Farm and serve as a facilitator at Bayawon's Farm. Dedicating some time for farmers is a sense of fulfillment for she was able assist her fellow farmers and was able to change their perspectives as regard to modernized type of farming.

"Siyempre kas maysa a trainer ken facilitator ket narigat met ta ado ti questions dagiti farmers, ken medyo close minded da pailang kadagita machineries a maininovate. Ngem with all dedication ket ipadas tayo latta nga ipaawat kenyada a nasayaat dagiti mayat nga epekto na no i-embrace tayo dagiti technologies nga umumay. Ta babaen iti dagitoy ket mapalag an ti trabaho iti pagtalonan ("Being a trainer and facilitator is challenging especially when we are questioned by our fellow farmers, and some of them tend to be resistant to innovative machinery. But with dedication, I try conveying the positive outcomes if we embrace the technologies being innovated. Because through these, we can do the work on fields easily."

It's not easy to change from our accustomed practices, particularly in farming. The familiarity and comfort they bring make us resist change. "Sometimes we need to over emphasize our point for them to believe on what we are teaching" she quoted.

"In assisting our fellow farmers, a close supervision is needed and in introducing a new technology it is better to have a techno-demo where they can compare their usual practice". For her, being a trainer and facilitator in a Farmer Field School is not only a way to give back to the community but also an opportunity for personal development, positive impact, and it gives joy in witnessing the growth of both farmers and yourselves.

"Learning is a continuous journey that never ends. Hands-on exercises are the best strategy to impart knowledge. Embrace the opportunity to engage actively in farming, as this will make us understand deeper the things we do. Do not be afraid to make mistakes, for they are part of the process. Mistakes served as my steppingstones that guided me towards improvement. Through these errors, we gain insights that prevent us from repeating them in the future" she concluded.//

CATALYSIS:

A Farmer's shift to new ways of rice farming

By: Esjay M. Zausa and Jaypee D. Na-oy

From a young age, Dominador Julian Jr. has followed his father's footsteps. Though financial constraints did not permit him to complete his own studies, farming made it possible for his siblings. He supported his siblings instead in pursuing their chosen degrees.

Building up his own family, farming became his lifeline as well. It was not just a job for sustenance, it is also served as one of the crucial pillars of their family's income.

"When my wife decided to pursue better opportunities abroad, I found myself responsible for taking care of our two children. To expand our agricultural practice, I ventured into integrated farming – incorporating fishponds into our rice crop production. The income generated from selling fish significantly improved our family's overall well-being."

To not limit his traditional knowledge in farming, he decided to join Farmers Field School on production of high-quality inbred rice and seed certification and farm mechanization offered by Jacob's Farm in 2019. He joined the said learning course in a hope that he will be able to acquire new knowledge that he could apply in his own farm.

“Using the walk-behind transplanter reduced the labor force I employed on my farm, and it ensured consistent plant spacing, which is crucial for improving crop growth and yield. I would also want to encourage my fellow farmers not to be afraid of trying possible innovations for this would significantly help us in producing high-quality rice.”

-Dominador Julian Jr.

Used to’s

Before the FFS, Mr. Julian is a traditional farmer who has long been conforming to the traditional farming. His family has been utilizing carabao in the preparation of their land for rice production. It is a laborious process for it requires a lot of time. Such time requisite limited them to look for other opportunities that could add up the family’s income.

“Sakbayak nga nakinayun idiay FFS ket ti pampamaayan mi ti panangisagana mi ti pagmulaan ket mangusar kami iti nuwang nga mangarado ken mangsuyod. Maysa a napansin ko ket medyo nabayag diay proseso karkaro ta medyo mabayag diay nowang nga agkuti. Ket idi kasdiay paylang ket han kami makatrabaho ti dadduma ta mabayagan kami idiay nga stage. Sakami lang medyo makalag-an ken makaaramid ti dadduma nga mabalin maaramid no nalpasen a naraepan diay pagtalunan. (Prior to participating in the FFS program, we relied solely on a carabao for the plowing and harrowing process. I observed that this approach was somewhat time-consuming, as the carabao worked at a slower pace. During the land preparation, it was challenging to multitask or engage in other activities. We could only work on other tasks once the plowing is done).”

In terms of sowing seeds, Mr. Julian believed that the more seeds broadcasted the higher the yield. He does not follow the standard planting distance of 20 meters by one meter. Since he cannot work on a one hectarage rice production area alone, he hires people to help him in uprooting and replanting the seedlings. This cost him higher labor costs.

“Ti kunak met lang idi ket no ado ti iraep ko idiay maysa a hill ket makaproduce to daytoy ti ado nga bunga. Isunga ti epapaaramid ko idi a ket mejo napusposkol iti ikaskasta mi a mangraep.

Continued on Next Page

Tapno ti kunak ket mapadas ko nga makaapit iti ado. (I previously thought that planting a greater number of seedlings per hill would result in a higher crop yield. That's why I tell the farmworkers to plant more quantity of seedlings so that I could increase my harvest)"

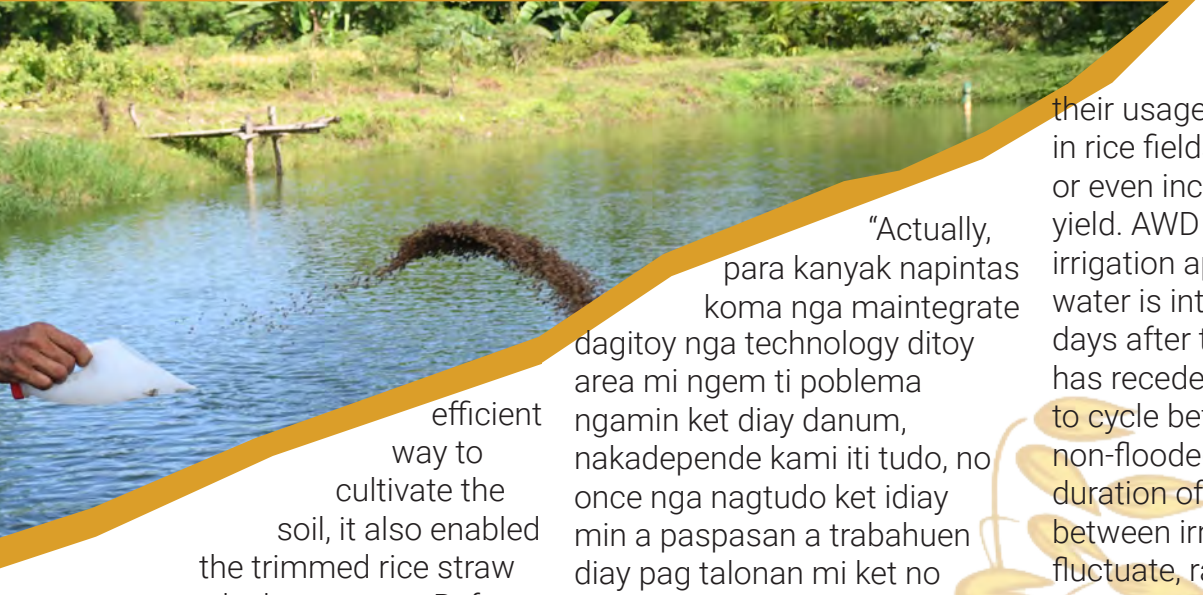
Tech realizations

In 2019, his perspectives on such traditional ways totally change for he was introduced to various technologies that greatly helped him increased his production. He was able to benchmark the use of walk behind mechanical transplanter, Palay check system and other machineries applicable.

"Idi umuna agalanganinak nga mangipadas ta idi ibagbaga da a mabalin nga iraep diay 15 days lang nga seedling ket haanak mamati ta no kitkitan ket nagbabassit pay laeng ket kunak, adi pay malmes dagitay raep. Ngem idi nagpa techno demo ni sir Jacob ket idiay ko nakita nga napintas gayam daytoy nga makinarya. Isunga di nalpas diay a techno demo ket pinadas ko met idiay kapagayak. (At first, I was hesitant to try and use the walk behind transplanter because the seedlings to be transplanted are just 15 days old, with this, I was not convinced that the seedling would thrive when transplanted. These seemed so small. But when Sir Jacob conducted the technology demonstration, I saw how effective this machinery is. After witnessing the technology demonstration, I tried to use and implement it in my crop production.)"

A significant technology he adopted after participating in the FFS is the utilization of the walk-behind transplanter. This technology proved instrumental in reducing his labor expenses. Previously, he relied on hiring laborers to manually uproot and transplant seedlings, incurring an average cost of P9,000.00. However, since implementing the machinery, his expenses have been limited to gasoline, food, and equipment rental.

Through the transplanter, he was able to follow recommended seedling distances when transplanting. This also enabled him to regulate the seedlings being transplanted per hill. When he started using the machinery, fertilizer application became easier. Also, it would only take a day to finish the work.
"Maysa nga ususarek metlang tatta ket diay hand tractor nga mankuliglig idiay daga. Idi inususar ko daytoy ket mapalungsotan nga nalaing dagidiay nabatbati nga garami. Ta idi nowang paylang ususaren me ket uray bingco bingcol day daga ket raraepan me ladta. Tatta ket magelgel nga nalaing diay lutak ket mayat ken alalisto diay ikasta min nga mangraep. (One machinery that I am using in my field is the hand tractor. I see it as an



efficient way to cultivate the soil, it also enabled the trimmed rice straw to properly decompose. Before, when we only used a carabao for plowing, the land was still cloddy during the transplanting. With the hand tractor, the soil becomes well-tilled facilitating faster sowing.)"

A drawback

"Mayat koma ti pagbalinan na ta sinurot mi diay naisuro, ngem ti problema mi ngamin ket diay padanum (following what were taught should have turned out good if not for the irrigation problems)", said Mr. Julian

Despite integrating such machinery and innovation in his rice production, a significant loss in his overall yield was observed. This loss was due to a problem with the irrigation system. The water supply is not sustainable in the area so farmers depend largely on rain that could possibly arrive in their area.

"Actually, para kanyak napintas koma nga maintegrate dagitoy nga technology ditoy area mi ngem ti poblema ngamin ket diay danum, nakadepende kami iti tudo, no once nga nagtudo ket idiay min a paspasan a trabahuen diay pag talonan mi ket no han kami makatrabaho idiay nga nagtudoan na ket han mi masangbot agagastos kami ti water pump. (Actually, for us, it's great to integrate these technologies in our area, but we are struggling with water supply. The community solely relies on rain, that's why if it is rainy season, we need to fast tract working on our rice field because if we fail to do so we will be obliged to pay for the gasoline of water pump.)"

Yet, even amid this challenge, there is a glimmer of hope for farmers like Mr. Julian, and it comes in the form of "Alternate Wetting and Drying" (AWD), a sustainable and eco-friendly agricultural practice that holds the potential to transform their fortunes.

Alternate Wetting and Drying (AWD) is an innovative water conservation technique that farmers can adopt to lessen their usage of irrigation water in rice fields while maintaining or even increasing crop yield. AWD involves a unique irrigation approach where water is introduced several days after the standing water has receded, causing the field to cycle between flooded and non-flooded conditions. The duration of dry soil periods between irrigations can fluctuate, ranging from as short as one day to more than ten days, contingent on factors such as soil type, weather conditions, and the growth stage of the crop.

The farming landscape is evolving, and with the challenges of water scarcity, innovative approaches like AWD emerge as beacons of hope for farmers battling against the odds. For farmers like Mr. Julian, the promise of alternate wetting and drying could mean a return to more prosperous harvests and a brighter future.

Thus, Mr. Julian encourages his fellow farmers to join various learning courses on agriculture for this will help in increasing their knowledge and would be beneficial in increasing their rice yield. Let us not close doors to better opportunities and try various innovations that could surely help us develop.//

2021

Through the years:

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One of the highlights of the 2021 accomplishment is the continuation of the Training of Trainers on Production of High-Quality Inbred Rice and Seeds, and Farm Mechanization. In this year another two batches were conducted with a 45 participant.

In the "Refresher Course on Seed Production for Seed Growers," a 3-day face-to-face training was conducted with Dr. Fidel Ramos of PhilRice-Isabela as the main trainer. Notably, 63% of participants have renewed their accreditation certificates, and 825 bags of certified seeds have been marketed through the Matagoan Agriculture Cooperative in support to the RCEF Seed Component.

The Training on Inbred Rice Seed Production and Certification for Deputized and Designated Seed Inspectors has successfully engaged 20 graduates who are now actively involved in farm inspections with seven seed growers inspected on the same year.

The "Training on Farm Layout, Design, and Landscape" involved 23 participants in a 3-day face-to-face course. Learning Site Operators, as a result, were able to prepare farm layouts and plans for their farm development, potentially contributing to farm tourism. The training also included a benchmarking activity with an exchange visit between learning sites in Kalinga and Ifugao, fostering the sharing of experiences, particularly in the conduct of Farmer Field Schools (FFS).

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Baby Angeline Tello, a person with dedication

Jaila S. Sagpa-ey

“Hindi hadlang ang pagiging Person With Disability (PWD) para gawin ang gusto mong gawin.”

Cliché as it may sound – but this is the real-life story of Baby Angeline, also called as Maan for others.

Baby Angeline, grew up in a farming community in Aguinaldo, Ifugao. Despite the fact that she belongs to a family of farmers- her engagement in farming activities was in a way delimited by her own family. It is because of their fear that doing much farming activities would bring her more harm. Accordingly, Baby Angeline was born physically normal. However, she had accidents that harmed her right leg and affected the way she walks. Despite that, she embraced her physical limitation.

After finishing her studies, she served as a radio operator at the Ambuklao Hydro-electric Plant-National Power Corporation (AHEP-NPC) in Bokod, Benguet from 1989 to 2003. She met her husband, Mr. Severino Tello, got married and started a family with their son Joshua. Together, they lived in the housing provided by the Agency and seldomly go home to Aguinaldo, Ifugao. Further, she did not limit herself to being a radio operator but she performed administrative-related tasks as well that made her a gem in the said agency. Working with the Agency trained her to do much paper works and knowledge and skills in transacting government-related projects and activities.

After 14 years of working with the AHEP-NPC, Baby Angeline needed to go home to her hometown- to personally oversee their farms for rice and corn production. Admittedly, she was not involved with farming-related activities as she is used to do backyard (pot) gardening since their housing in Ambuklao does not have wide area. “I needed to go home to manage the land left by our parents- not just for me but also for my sibling’s family’s members because I am the only surviving member of my family”. Both her parents and two brothers already passed away leaving her to take care of her nieces and nephews and the properties as well. Using her separation pay from AHEP-NPC, she started developing the farm.

Deciding to till and develop their farms, Baby Angeline started to establish a good relationship with the community and to the LGU especially the Office of the Municipal Agriculturist of Aguinaldo, Ifugao. Showing a strong will to help the farming community, and the

"The only limit to your impact is your imagination and commitment"

experiences in dealing with the government procedures guidelines and process, she was elected as the president of the Irrigators Association (IA). Until now, the IA members put their trust and confidence to her to lead the association. With her able leadership, support of the LGU and the members of the association, the IA was able to avail some projects and grants like farm machineries, farming inputs, trainings and seminars among others from various agencies.

As a leader, Baby Angeline experienced a lot that she needed to become a mediator, negotiator, a link or whatever it may be called. At times when problems arise between and among the members, she is there to sort things out. When difficulties would come in transacting with the partner agencies, she would be there to patiently complete the needed requirements and processes, personally following-up the documents so the Programs Projects and Activities (PPA's) the association are requesting would be granted. With the dedication she exemplifies to preserve the integrity and unity within the association, she gained the trust of the members and is still there as a leader over the years.

Baby Angeline is so much grateful for she was sent to attend a training for PWDs on farm mechanization by the Villar's Social Institute of Poverty Alleviation and Governance (SIPAG) Foundation.

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The training showcases persons with disability (PWD) and women-friendly farming. With no reservation, Baby Angeline welcomed the chance and gladly attended and finished the course. Accordingly, the SIPAG staff were there to assist her and other participants to complete the course.

Since then, other training opportunities followed. She completed the trainings conducted by the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) namely: Trainers Methodology Certificate I; National Certificate (NC) II in Agripreneurship; and NC II in Organic Agriculture Production II in 2019. The following year, she finished NC IV in Agripreneurship. These gave her confidence to accept the call for her to become a learning site for agriculture (LSA) under the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement (RCEF) by the DA-ATI-RTC-CAR in 2021.

Certified as LSA, she was then invited to attend for more trainings. In 2021, together with her husband, they completed the Training of Trainers' (ToT) on High-Quality Inbred Rice and Seeds and Farm Mechanization. After which, she finished the RCEF- ToT on Pest and Nutrient Management facilitated by the Philippine Rice Institute (Phil Rice). As part of being a RCEF- LSA and Farm School, Baby Angeline made sure that the trainers employed in her farm are also capacitated. All her four trainers completed the training on High-Quality Inbred Rice and Seeds and Farm Mechanization implemented by DA-ATI-CAR. These trainings gave their skills and knowledge on farming and boost their confidence to share what they have learned to other farmers in their area.

Baby Angeline recalled that it was during one the training she attended with the SIPAG Foundation that the concept of LSA was introduced to her. So, when the DA-ATI-ATI-CAR were looking for possible farmers to become LSA as partners in the RCEF-identified areas, Baby Angeline took the chance. It was her dream to help improve increase the awareness of the community to apply better farming technologies. As she too was given the opportunity to gain knowledge and skills from the trainings she attended.

With little knowhow on how to start with the farm school alone, she bravely took the opportunity to become a DA-ATI LSA and TESDA farms school, which she named Baby Angeline Integrated Farm. With the help of the RCEF program implementing agencies and the fellow trainers, her farm school is slowly learning the mechanics and dynamics of its operation.

At present, her husband and son, Joshua fully accepted the challenge to finally join her in managing the farm. After the certification as LSA, she was given slot by TESDA to implement RCEF-related activities. Further, another 75 slots to implement the Farmers Field School (FFS) on Production of High-Quality Inbred Rice and Seed Certification and Farm Mechanization.
Baby Angeline sees the changes when it comes to farming practice in the area. Farmers are now embracing new farming technologies and

principles like the use of farm machineries right amount and timing of fertilizer application, pest management among others.

The Baby Angeline Integrated Farm is still at its initial stage of operation, thus the farm school needed to shell out its own finances to pay for the other costs being incurred in implementing the FFS courses. These would include transportation cost to fetch the participants to and from the venue to their residence, uniform of the participants and insurance. Baby Angeline reiterates that having to pay the other expenses do not matter as long as the participants will gain knowledge and skills to increase their production. She is happy that the farm is being used to transform others' lives. Even if her parents and brothers are not with her to enjoy the farm activities, Baby Angeline would not ask for more with uncle Ino and Joshua with her to manage the farm school. Baby Angeline faced many challenges and issues in her life, despite that she happily shared that it took her faith to God to overcome those. Even at this point, she knows that she will be facing many challenges as she embarks on another journey, she is still confident that she will rise above as God will be with her all the way.//

Responding Confidently to Extend to Farmers: Story of Bacayan's Farm (Michael and Angie Lumas-i)

Jaila S. Sagpa-ey

God is in this story; God is in the details…., this is perhaps the best way to describe the journey of the Lumas-i family of the Bacayan's Farm nurtured by the divine essence of dedication.

Michael Lumas-i, known as 'doc' in the community emerges as a leader driven by instinct and experience. His decisions often diverging from conventional instructions, prove right in the end, earning him respect. Alongside him, his wife and their children play crucial roles in transforming the farm into a farm family business. The Bacayan's 2.6 hectare Learning Site for Agriculture (LSA)

funded by the RCEF is a rice-based integrated farm which showcases the production of lowland vegetables and mallard-duck-egg production.

The LSA situated at Tannubong, Ipil, Tabuk City, Kalinga is a TESDA Accredited farm school offering a free learning course on production of high-quality inbred rice and seed certification and farm mechanization.

A Closer Look

On a fine rainy day, the family members and farm workers are dined for breakfast as they prepare to pour their sweats in their daily task. Simultaneous to flow of instruction is a beckoned leadership responsibility of Mr. Bacayan as he answered phone calls for coordination from his community.

With their respective roles, from Micah (the youngest daughter) alongside her husband carefully handling and packing the Itik-eggs and lowland vegetables to farm workers braving the rain to rouge in the rice fields. Rouging is a systematic removal of off-types, plants from another crop or variety and diseased plants.

As the rain ceased, the farm workers promptly laid out the long nylon ropes in the rice fields, allowing the pollens to dry before initiating the 'pagpag.' Adhering to the schedule is crucial for the farm, ensuring that the rice seed production remains on track without any delays.

Prior to's

Prior to accreditation as LSA, the farm served as a demonstration site of new agricultural technologies. Mr. Bacayan collaborated with the SL Agritech Corporation (SLAC) for the cultivation of Hybrid Rice Seeds. The farm allocated specific areas for the purpose of the techno demo which aims to guarantee the availability of hybrid seeds in the country. The techno demo enabled him, and his family broaden their knowledge and skills in rice production.

As a rice-based integrated farm, the farm cultivates a variety of lowland crops. The favorable soil conditions in the area ensure the thriving growth of the crops.

From a clay type of soil, the couple successfully transformed the section into arable land. Recognizing the significance of maintaining good soil conditions, they incorporated rice hulls, coffee, corn husks, and other organic materials into the soil. These substrates were integrated to enhance the soil structure.

In 2010, Mr. Bacayan received an award from the National Gawad Saka as Outstanding Hybrid Rice Farmer Award. He

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received a rice drum seeder to be used for their farming activities. Through RCEF, they were enlightened on the usage of rice drum seeder and experienced its benefits.

"As an RCEF LSA, we are obliged to make sure that we apply and incorporate the mechanization in our farming activities. Through these machineries, we were able to lower the cost and inputs in our rice farming activities as less man powers are required", claims Mr. Bacayan.

Being an RCEF-implementing partner was not that easy path for them during the earlier days. There was a point where they are able to have 38 enrollees, but only eight completed the said course. These eight graduates are whom they now considered as the 'success stories' of the farm school. For they got to benchmark various practices and innovations which are beneficial in increasing their yield and income.

Micah shares, "maragsakan kami nu adda masabat mi nga mangibagbaga nga agpaysu gayam jay inadal tayu panggep panagrecord. Idi nalpas adal tayu ken nag-apit, nagrecord ak ket nakitak nga adda gayam ganansiya. (We are just happy every time we encounter our graduates attesting that what they have learned are true. after our training and during our harvest, I did record, and I learned that indeed, I have a gain from my harvest.)"

As the family continues to implement the Farmer Field School, the couple see the fruits of advocating the good rice production management. Prior that, they encounter people who contradicts with what they are teaching.

"Idi ah ket ipapilit da ti kayat ken ammu da, ngem tatta inot-inot met ket nakita da usto nga wagas gapu ti trainings. Kasla iti panag-usar ti drum seeder. Ada ti maysa nga kanayun nga mangkonkontra, ngem tatta ket isunan kadua mi nga mangibagbaga ti kinamayat ti drum seeder ti dadduma. Nu ti panagpadanum, ti ammu ti farmers ket adu ti kasapulan ti pagay, isunga idi ket awan ti dumanun ditoy banda mi. Ngem tatta ket ammu dan ti usto, sunga tatta adun makadanun ditoy banda. (Fellow farmers tend to do what

they know is right, but because of the trainings they now learned the benefit of using a drum seeder and proper water management).

Through RCEF, they were taught to use high quality rice seeds in which they had obtain a minimum of 20 kilograms for one hectare. They were also taught on proper timing and right way of spraying.

On to LSA Certification

In 2019, Michael, at that time was the chair of the Regional Agriculture and Fishery Council (RAFC). Every after their meeting at the DA-RFO Baguio, he visits other Offices like NIA-CAR and ATI-CAR. In one of his visits at ATI-CAR, Mr. Cristino Balancio asked him if he wanted to be accredited as a LSA. Immediately, he submitted a letter of intent.

Before accreditation, he has basic knowledge on the basic functions of LSA, since there are invitation of meetings along with other RBO's groups like LSAs, MS and RIC's.

With his encounter with the LSA's and MS, in his heart, Michael silently prays, 'maysa ak met koma ijay (I wish I am one of them)". Despite not being an LSA, Michael continuously engaged into farming and slowly developed his area. True enough, that dream God placed in his heart became a reality as he now joined the LSA family in the Region.

As an LSA, who are obliged to showcase various innovations and technologies, the couple started tilling their farm and for years they slowly developed their area. They used to live in a small house as they called kubo. At that time, there is no road connection in the area giving the family a hard time to go to the town's center.

To not limit theirselves to traditional farming, Angie showed the passion to learn about new farming technologies and grabbed every opportunities such as seminars, trainings, and foras. Michael was then 'too shy' to interacts with other people. Even then, Angie patiently invited him to join seminars and open his doors for networks until such time that Michael had the confidence to personally interact with others and expand their partnerships. And now, he is very good at building and sustaining relationship with others- a virtue that serves as one of the building blocks of their success.

The farm always caters to various visitors from government and private agencies and individuals. Even for short visit, Michael and the family made sure that the concerns of these visitor are well attended, be it for monitoring, updates, simply a short visit and or storytelling. The family took time to share stories, learn and laugh with the people visiting them, over cups of flowing coffee.

Moving Forward

With the inevitable rice field conversion to commercial areas in Tabuk, together with other stakeholders, they are recommending the need to expand the rice production areas to other places. In support to this plan, the Bacayan's farm is set to conduct mobile class to other municipalities like in Tanudan. Through this mobile class, they can share the technologies employed to help increase the yield of the fellow farmers.

Their journey guided by faith and resilience began with a dream seeded in Michael's heart. Through dedication and endurance, they transformed dreams into reality, making Bacayan's farm a beacon of inspiration. Today, their passion for farming, shared knowledge, and commitment to instill right values continue to shape the farms legacy.//

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Through the years:

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For three years of implementation, the ATI-RTC-CAR was able to establish 16 Learning Sites for Agriculture in the provinces of Ifugao and Kalinga. 14 LSA's are now accredited by TESDA-CAR to offer a learning course on Production of High-Quality Inbred Rice and Seeds and Farm Mechanization.

On the same year, the two last batches of Training of Trainers (TOT) on Production of High-Quality Inbred Rice and Seeds and Farm Mechanization were conducted. A total of 63 participants were engaged. As an agreement, most of the graduates signified that they would act as trainer and facilitator at their respective Farm Schools. This is to enable them to practice the various learnings and skills learned during the training.

Additionally, another TOT program centered on the "Digital Agriculture Course (DAC)" specifically designed for RCEF Farm Schools, attracting 23 participants was conducted. This course focused on empowering trainers with the skills required to integrate digital tools and innovations into agricultural education. Topics covered in this training included the latest technologies and practices in digital agriculture, aligning with the broader objective of staying current with technological advancements in the field. Both TOT programs underscore the commitment of enhancing the capabilities of trainers and ensuring the effective dissemination of knowledge and skills to farmers within the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Program framework.//

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