



Department of Agriculture
**Special Area for Agricultural
Development Program**
DA New Building, Elliptical Road,
Quezon City, Philippines

31 October 2019

MEMORANDUM

FOR : **Regional Executive Directors of DA RFOs CAR, IV-B, V, VI, VII, IX, X, XI, XII, & XIII**

ATTN : **SAAD Regional Focal Persons**

FROM : **Director, Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) Program**

SUBJECT : **Crafting of SAAD Newsletter and Intensifying the Dissemination of SAAD Press Releases or Articles**

The Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) of the Department of Agriculture saw the importance of informing the public about the program's activities, recent changes, current status, and impending developments.

With this, we would like to request the DA-SAAD regional offices to craft their own SAAD newsletters and intensify the dissemination of press releases or articles.

It is also recommended to assign a staff that will focus on drafting and writing articles, i.e. success stories, mass distribution of interventions, and current events of SAAD.

This will keep our organization, our partners, and the public informed about our program.

Attached are latest copies of DA-SAAD Region 8's monthly newsletter Peryodikit, which will serve as your reference in compliance with this memo.

Thank you.


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RAMDAM NA!



“*Ramdam na*,” which is slang vernacular for “*Nararamdaman na*” (It is already being felt), sums up the impression of grateful beneficiaries who were privileged to receive varied assistance from 2017–2018 SAAD Program. This was the preponderant appreciation from the recipients of “unexpected whirlwind of blessings” coming from the government.

This overall impression was floated on during the 2nd round of project monitoring conducted in January 2019. Farmers who were benefited by the implemented projects were enthusiastic in welcoming the M&E team, eager as they were to relate their experiences. They seemed to possess an added boost to their morale because of perceived financial independence and the prospect of generating potential earning in the future.

The impact of the projects may not have conducted earlier on in the 5 SAAD Program–covered province manifested yet during the swing of monitoring s sometime in

September 2018. However, 5 months later, it is already felt by the recipients, albeit moderately, especially those who have already gone through several cycles of production. Results of the 1st formal monitoring held last year were featured in the September 2018 issue of *Peryodikit*.

The findings during the 1st monitoring were validated in January 2019. These were in the areas of beneficiary selection, delivery and distribution of inputs, and project coordination. More findings were highlighted in this year’s monitoring, such as the variance of breed/variety of delivered inputs from those specified in the PRs. An example of which is the ube cuttings supplied to farmers in Calbiga, Samar. They were of mixed type: *tinampay* and *inuringnon*, even if it was specified in the PR that the variety required was of the former kind due to its aroma, color, customer preference, and ease in processing.

In the latest project monitoring, some best practices have surfaced that possibly contributed to the viability of the interventions implemented in the poor communities. Among these outstanding features worth adopting in other areas are as follows:

- Incentive/s given by LGU to high-performing farmers boost their morale. In the case of Hazel Socorro of San Roque, Northern Samar, the Honorable Mayor awarded her a buffalo for garnering the highest sale of Php37,500.00 among all swine fattening project beneficiaries. A similar case happened in Oras, Eastern Samar in June 2018, where Honorable Mayor Vivian P. Alvarez gave 2 piglets each to the top three swine fatteners who, upon harvest, obtained the highest gross weight.
- A duly-notarized Affidavit of Recipient is issued, copy furnished MLGU–San Roque, Northern Samar for every sale made by the FB. This is in the best interest of SAAD Program as the recipient cannot dispose of his/her commodity anytime at his/her discretion because it is being

monitored by the LGU. The document may also be the basis for giving of awards by the MLGU to deserving farmers.

- OPA–Southern Leyte, in coordination with PPMSO, assists farmers in marketing their products. Product assemblers, Zaragoza and PHCCI, had been contracted to purchase on a wholesale basis the farmers’ harvested cassava and corn, respectively. In the marketing of pigs, the office also facilitated in selling the beneficiaries’ harvested swine to local butchers/buyers.
- In Matuguinao, Samar, all beneficiaries of the Swine Production Project agreed that for every delivery of the gilt, 2 weanlings will be donated to the Municipal Agriculture Office for rollover to next-in-line beneficiaries who have not yet availed of the intervention. The farmers themselves will agree on whom to give the piglet/s. If the FB decides to give only 1 weanling, then he/she should donate 3 upon the next delivery.

This Issue Highlights:

- **Ramdam Na!**
- **New Beginnings**

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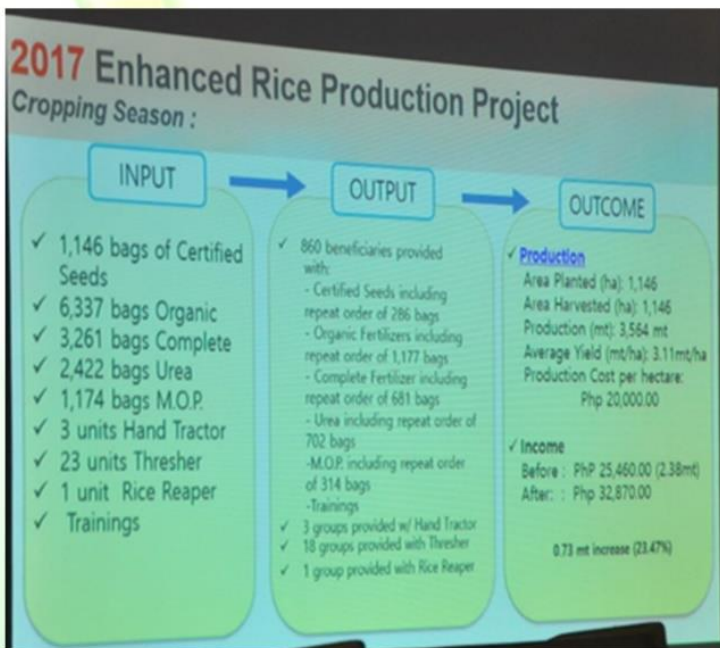
NEW BEGINNINGS

The start of a year is usually the opportune time to take stock of what had been, what now, and what is to come. On a personal level, it is the right time to reflect and contemplate on past achievements, successes, lapses in judgment, challenges, and other considerations that we deem important to our lives. For corporate endeavors, such as the implementation of the SAAD Program, new years are a time to evaluate past performances, streamline and consolidate forces, and plan out strategies to improve project implementation.



Thus, it was with this mindset that the FY 2019 SAAD Program Special Meeting was conducted at Sophia's Way, Leyte Park Resort Hotel, Tacloban City on January 25, 2019.

Before the meeting formally started, there was preliminary consultation with the PPMOs regarding issues in the respective areas that contributed to/bogged down the development of projects. Area Coordinators (ACs) present were reviewed on the right process of validating FBs, amid feedbacks of irregularities in the selection of the latter. Some operational and administrative matters were also taken up prior to the meeting proper.



Dr. Andrew Rodolfo T. Orais, RTD for Operations and SAAD Program 8 Regional Focal Person, warmly welcomed the participants consisting of key implementors – program management, PMED, AMAD, APCOs, and field officers and staff.

Each Provincial Coordinator (PC) of the five (5)–covered provinces presented his/her FY 2016–2018 Production Report, by Project, according to a standard report form provided by RPMSO. The discussions were lively, informative, and revealing. The panel of reactors offered objective suggestions/recommendations to further enhance the level of development of interventions in the poor communities.

Among the agreements reached by the discussants are as follows:

In line with the program thrust, which is geared towards organizing individuals into associations, the staff, particularly ACs, need to be trained on basic skills in community organizing so they

could facilitate the process among FBs, until they are registered with the proper accreditation agency/ies. ACs also need to be trained on value formation, leadership skills, organizational strengthening, simple bookkeeping, etc. so they could ultimately cascade these competencies to the farmers.

Check the 2017 downloaded funds to the provinces if there are savings, so mortalities of animals can be replaced, i.e. goat in Eastern Samar. But timely damage report has to be filed for the savings to be used for stock replacement.

Get the percentage of gilts that were inseminated but did not bear weanlings, or poultry that did not lay eggs, so the concerned supplier is informed for appropriate action.

Follow-up trainings for FBs should be conducted, according to their felt needs. If there is need to train them on appropriate technologies, marketing, and the like, they should be prioritized using funds from accrued savings. PC Ferdinand Q. Ultra proposed to conduct a Farmers' Day in Northern Samar to orient recipient farmers on best/improved practices.

In closing the forum, RTD Orais urged the officers and staff to learn from each other's experiences and mistakes; refine/polish their practices until they are perfected; maintain active, healthy dialogue and exchange of ideas; and foster goodwill among the farmers and other stakeholders.





Farmer-Massage Therapist

The gnarled hands and crow's feet on her ancient face speak volumes about life in the countryside. The hands are calloused and lined, the veins slightly throbbing as the key informant interview progressed during SAAD Program monitoring team's visit to her on January 22, 2019.

These are the hands that till the soil and produce food for our table. These are also the hands that deftly rub, knead, and apply gentle pressure on aging limbs of sick and rehabilitating patients.

Yes, **Carolina Grande, 76 years old**, widow, and resident of **Brgy. Lipata, Allen, Northern Samar**, considers herself first and foremost a farmer, but she also engages in therapy and reflexology as her favorite avocation. She is a beneficiary of the Rice Production Enhancement Project in the area.

As beneficiary, Lola Carolina, as she is fondly called, originally received in early 2018 one (1) sack rice seeds, 6 bags organic fertilizer, 3 bags complete fertilizer, 2 bags Urea, and 1 bag Muriate of Potash. From these inputs, she was able to harvest 78 sacks of *palay* during the regular cropping. In June 2018, she was a recipient of the rice repeat order; thence she was provided with the same inputs. Upon harvest during the 2nd cropping, she unprecedently reaped 86 sacks of *palay*.

Local farmers practice two cropping a year. As tenant of the 1-hectare rice field she is tilling, she is obligated to give the landowner 24 cavans of *palay* per cropping. After reserving 2 sacks rice seeds from her harvest for planting in the subsequent season, she sells what's left to local wholesalers in Allen for PhP600.00/cavan.

As on-call massage therapist, she earns about PhP350.00–500.00/session, earning for her an estimated additional income of PhP4,000.00/month. Her clientele reaches as far as Catarman, by word of mouth, because of her vaunted skill.




During the interview, she talked about halcyon days when her husband was still alive, and together they cultivated 4 hectares with the help of a carabao they owned. But their rice production always remained at 20 cavans because they had no budget for fertilizers then. If ever there was extra money, they could only apply 1–2 bags for the entire field.

Hence, she was profusely grateful for being chosen as one of the SAAD Program beneficiaries because aside from the unexpected volume of production, she learned the value of full fertilization from the Farmers' Field School conducted by the UEP, and its effect on rice productivity.


Lola Carolina may have arms that look distinctly, and her hands may be deformed, but they are instrumental in feeding and nourishing a hungry world. After all, as they say, beautiful hands are those that do work and make a difference.

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ELEVATING THE STATUS OF FARMERS



The life of a farmer is never easy, as a farmers' association president quipped during the turnover of 2016 SAAD Program farm machinery/equipment in Brgy. Old Manunca, Sta. Rita, Samar on February 8, 2019. The ill-effects of climate change, the searing heat during El Niño and mud that clings to the feet in La Niña, escalating prices of farm inputs, and other agricultural concerns, exacerbated by domestic problems, render farming practice frustrating and oftentimes tiresome to the ordinary food producer, especially the middling ones.

The scenario highlights the need for consultation with the farmers on their specific requirements in order to address their various concerns. This, SAAD Program carried out with the stratified Multi-Year Planning (MYP) workshops held in 2018, documentation of which was featured in the September 2018 issue of *Peryodikit*. Plans from all sectors, from the national to the farmer level, were deliberated to make certain that opinions from all stakeholders were considerably

included.

Periodic monitoring activities likewise provided program management the opportunity to get a grasp of what's afoot at the grassroots level. The two monitoring activities conducted in September 2018 and January 2019 were instrumental in getting first-hand information about farmers' experiences, their joys, travails, and hopes for



themselves, their family, and community.

From testimonies of project recipients, it was heartwarming to learn that the interventions put in place by the program made a dent in varying degrees in their life. Some of them were already able to make home improvements using the income they derived from the endeavor. Others have leveled up from production to processing and value-adding activities to become micro-entrepreneurs.

SAAD Program interventions also include the development of farmers' capacities through specialized trainings on appropriate

technologies, aside from handholding and mentoring activities conducted during regular visits of field personnel to their farms. After a lifetime of rice farming, some have only realized the value of full fertilization upon undergoing Farmers' Field School and experiencing increased volume of production.

First-time corn farmers in Malitbog, Southern Leyte, cultivating six (6) hectares. of rolling hills, were previously hesitant to venture into hitherto unknown territory because of uncertainties about marketing the voluminous product, but upon assurances of OPA and PPMSO-Southern Leyte that their harvest would be contracted for purchase by PHCCI, they proceeded to plant the commodity.

SAAD Program's promotion of farm mechanization through the provision of equipment/machinery and small tools runs parallel to the Department of Agriculture's thrust to mechanize farms in order to improve productivity. Qualified FAs became recipients of these technological devices, such as tractor with complete accessories, irrigation pump, multi-cultivator, thresher, etc. after having undergone rigorous evaluation. Currently, the beneficiary groups are enjoying the use of these equipment, which according to them are an immense help, lightening their burden, while ostensibly lowering production cost.

Certainly, management cannot

discount the reality that a handful are still at the start-up level up to the present time due to a confluence of factors, but most have already reaped the fruits of their hard work through sheer industry and determination.

From the foregoing, which shows vivid proof of the projects' impact in the life of farmers, there is consistent gradual improvement in their status, not only in their production and income, but more so in their knowledge, practices, and attitude towards farming, which is



their lifeline to advancement.

No doubt, more positive testimonies are forthcoming as SAAD Program advances into the midterm. SAAD Program reaches out to as many beneficiaries as it can serve to make a difference as the country goes full momentum into agricultural progress.

This Issue Highlights:

- Elevating the Status of Farmers
- Commodities and Supplies delivered to selected LGUs

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COMMODITIES AND SUPPLIES DELIVERED TO SELECTED LGUs



In a blitz of successive deliveries to selected municipalities in Samar Island, poultry heads consisting of ready-to-lay chickens, native chickens, and mallard ducks, were transported to and received by agriculture officials in different locations and drop-off points from February 12–15, 2019. Subsequently, the birds were distributed to identified beneficiaries at 6 heads per farmer.

Six hundred (600) heads of ready-to-lay chickens were delivered in equally same number to Dolores, Maslog, Gen. MacArthur, and Quinapondan, Eastern Samar, while 432 heads per municipality were delivered to Mapanas, Palapag, and Lapinig, Northern Samar. For the native chickens, which are replacement stocks, 360 heads per LGU-recipient went to Silvino Lobos and Lope de Vega in Northern Samar. Earlier on, 180 bags of layer premium feeds were delivered to Silvino Lobos and same number of bags to Lope de Vega on January 31, 2019.

Two hundred forty (240) heads of mallard ducks were respectively brought to the following LGUs: Catubig, Las Navas, and Pambujan, Northern Samar; Borongan City and Hernani, Eastern Samar; and Hinabangan, Matuguinao, San Jose de Buan, San Sebastian, and Talalora, Samar.

Veterinarians of the Livestock Section, DA-RFO 8 who facilitated in the inspection of the fowls accompanied the deliveries.

Meanwhile, one hundred forty-six (146) bottles/vials of drugs and biologics were respectively transported to Northern Samar and Leyte. They comprised of multivitamins (10), wound spray (20), Iron Dextran (10), dewormers (100), Oxytocine (4), and Oxytritra cycline (2). Twenty-one (21) bags complete fertilizer (14-14-14) were likewise delivered to the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) in Calbiga, Samar on February 8, 2019 for use of FBs in the Ube Production Project.



Celebrating the Life of SAAD Rural Women

The National Women's Month Celebration every March is part of the worldwide observance of the International Women's Day. Its theme, "We Make Change Work for Women," highlights the empowerment of women as active contributors to and claim-holders of development.

Empowering women enables them to confidently and meaningfully engage with appropriate institutions to ensure that they contribute to and benefit from development and changes.

SAAD Program, which has been in existence since 2016, has paved the way for an enabling environment for women to be empowered. Through the various interventions initiated mostly in the countryside for the poor and marginalized farmers, the program has always been a partner for a change that is gender-responsive. It has consistently emphasized the collective effort, collaboration, and participation to ensure that women are not left behind in the pursuit of change.

During the monitoring blitz conducted in the 1st quarter of 2019 of randomly selected program areas in Region 8, it is heartwarming to note that in almost all areas visited, the role of women as active change agents has been emphasized. Women were observed to be involved in critical decision-making and in all aspects of project implementation where they were concerned. In a patriarchal society such as the Philippines, to be heard and have a voice in decision-making are indeed major achievements for Filipino

women, especially those living in rural areas.

Progressive associations ran predominantly by women, such as the Rural Improvement Club (RIC) of Brgy. Libas, Lavezares, Northern Samar; Cansoso Livelihood Association of Workers (CLAW) of Brgy. Cansoso, Matag-ob, Leyte; and New Katipunan Farmer's Association (NEKAFAA), Brgy. New Katipunan, Malitbog, Southern Leyte; to name a few, attest to the fact that, given the enabling environment to access equal rights opportunities, make reasonable decisions, and be able to implement them, women could be empowered.

Women who were selected as individual project beneficiaries have also shown due diligence in ensuring that the assistance given them by the program did not come to waste. Rather, because of the drive to better their situation for the sake of their family, most have already graduated from start-up food producers to become processors, and subsequently, independent entrepreneurs. Of course, the unconditional support of the family is also a crucial contributor to their success.

A case in point is the unassuming Hazel Socorro of Brgy. Balnasan, San Roque, Northern Samar, a Swine Fattening Project beneficiary, who was given an incentive by the MLGU in the form of a buffalo for garnering the highest sales of PhP37,500.00 in one (1) production cycle among all swine fattening project beneficiaries in the locality. Nancy Montillano of Brgy. Sabang, Oras, Eastern Samar, initially received three (3) piglets and feeds from the 2017 SAAD Program Hog Fattening Project. From being a mere hog fatterer, she has gradually evolved into an entrepreneur, now owning a sari-sari store.

The anecdotes above are just a drop in the bucket of women who strove to rise from life's adversities and came out victorious, who opted to work and make a living alongside their partners instead of being fence-sitters and indulging in unproductive pastimes, and those who caused their collective voices to be heard and continue to make a difference in their respective spheres of influence.

So, to all wives, mothers, sisters, daughters, aunts, nieces, widows, single parents, and the like, in this, the National Women's Month, SAAD Program salutes and commends you for your fortitude, patience, and grace amidst domestic and societal challenges that you face every day. Let change work for women!

This Issue Highlights:

- Celebrating the Life of SAAD Rural Women
- Hold On!

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HOLD ON!

The positive outlook of farmers as manifested in the past two project monitoring activities held in September 2018 and January 2019 is a boon to program implementation because it boosts the morale of field staff/personnel as well as the beneficiaries themselves.

Majority of the recipients were profuse in thanking SAAD Program management during these periodic visits for what some of them consider as “stroke of luck” or “good fortune” to have been bestowed with this unexpected assistance. The poorest of the poor, especially those who received the grant for the first time, were appreciative because, according to them, the government has finally

reached out to them, which they have not experienced with any other program before. Hence, it is just right that this goodwill is reciprocated by sustaining the projects and even sharing to others the material benefits they are now enjoying, they added.

As strategized during the series of multi-year planning workshops conducted in 2018, these identified grantees will be assisted consistently by the program, until management deems that they can be considered financially independent already. For now, however, the inputs must still be continued to level up from where they started to entrepreneurial level. The coaching, mentoring, and handholding activities should be maintained as well to guide and instruct the farmers, yet always conscious of their traditional mores, attitudes, and indigenous practices.

As it is, the individual farmers and their associations are happy and content with the given inputs. Even those who had not been as successful initially in their respective endeavors due to animal mortality or crop loss are still hopeful that they can recover in the next production cycle or succeeding planting season.

It has become evident at this time that best practices worth emulating have evolved, enhancing project implementation. These practices, such as the offer of incentives, which were initiated by the LGUs, and the farmers themselves, without prodding from the program, encourage the recipients to outdo each other's performance, in the process benefiting them and their families. Others were put in place to improve systems and procedures.

As SAAD Program advances into the midterm, the management would like to convey one very important message to all stakeholders – **HOLD ON!** Continue with the initiatives in the pursuit of its goals for obviously it is on the right track. Barring any unforeseen circumstances that would render the program inutile, there is bright promise that our food producers are on the road to becoming economically self-sufficient by end of project period, and even beyond. The silver lining seems to finally loom at the horizon.





From Success to Significance

During the recent 2019 SAAD Program 1st Quarter Assessment held at Villa Isabel, Sorsogon City on April 29–May 3, 2019, RPMSO 8 again clinched 2nd place as top performer with a rating of 81.25%, based on overall performance: obligation (29.56%), disbursement (19.78%), and physical accomplishment (31.90%). As some would say, "This has become a force of habit," because for the past two (2) years, or since the SAAD NPMSO had given out awards for top performers, RPMSO 8 consistently came out either as winner or runner-up from among 8 SAAD implementing regions.

This in effect is a recognition of the efforts of RPMSO 8 program management, and the patience, dedication, and passion to serve by all staff and field implementors. It goes without saying that program implementation is cruising on the right track because majority of the interventions have been sustained with the cooperation of LGUs, and the farmer-beneficiaries are happy that their endeavors have borne fruit and are now helping their families.

On a related vein, it was discussed during the plenary that the Philippine Statistics Authority recently released the 1st Semester 2018 Poverty Incidence among Families, by Province: First Semesters of 2015 and 2018. Comparative statistical data showed that poverty incidence in 2015 vis-à-vis 2018 in the four SAAD-covered provinces in Region 8 dramatically decreased, thus: from 53.8 in 2015, it decreased to 30.0 in 2018 in Northern Samar; in Samar, from 43.9 in 2015 it decreased to 32.2 in 2018; from 38.4 in 2015, it went down to 29.4 in 2018 in Leyte; and in Southern Leyte, the decrease was from 31.7 in 2015 to 22.8 in 2018. It was only in Eastern Samar that the poverty incidence remained about the same – from 42.9 in 2015 to 43.0 in 2018.

Amid the success that SAAD Program 8 is reaping, the challenge, however, is to move on to significance. Success is great, but significance is lasting. It is therefore apropos that halfway through the project, it is time to discover where the stakeholders' deepest passions intersect with their innate abilities, and harness them to make more



"Our souls are not hungry for fame, comfort, wealth, or power; but for meaning, for the sense that we have figured out how to live lives that matter, so the world will be a little bit different for our having passed through it."

Harold Kushner,
Living a Life that Matters

meaningful impact in the lives of the project recipients. Likewise, it is time to reflect on the real purpose of the program, and what matters in the long run.

Of course, it is essential to look back on the achievements and lessons of the first half of the program, but it is equally important to have a forward-looking mindset. It may take several iterations to improve on what had been, but if that's what it takes to create more impact and contribution, then it should be done. Through creativity and clearer strategic planning, it is possible to carve out significant portions of time, energy, and talent, and work only on things that really matter.

The NPMSO's immediate plans are to conduct an impact assessment of the program interventions on project recipients; converge the DA and BFAR SAAD initiatives; and launch the SAAD SAGA 2019, which is a partners' forum for the exchange of knowledge and information, and recognition of exceptional partner-beneficiaries.

The remaining project life would be concentrated on continuous capability-building activities, both for the project implementors and the farmers. To constantly improve on the performance in regard to obligations, disbursements, and physical accomplishments and perfect the procurement process are likewise on point. Efforts would be made to mentor, coach, and handhold the beneficiaries as this would serve as added morale booster and motivation on their part. Consequently, focus is now more on significance by using our time and talent wisely to reach out and support others for that's when truly meaningful success shall have been achieved.

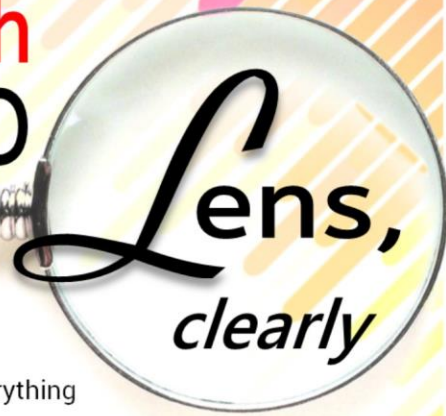
TOP PERFORMERS: BASED ON OVERALL PERFORMANCE					
SAAD OUS	Obligation (30%)	Disbursement (30%)	Physical Accomplishment (40%)	TOTAL (100%)	RANK
CAR	29.87	25.62	49.76	105.25	1
8	29.56	19.78	31.90	81.25	2
5	30.00	19.48	31.31	80.80	3
7	25.44	10.57	37.03	73.04	4
11	28.80	6.86	24.10	59.75	5
9	27.36	9.48	21.26	58.10	6
12	29.76	15.00	10.70	55.45	7
10	22.82	2.22	7.18	32.22	8

This Issue Highlights:

- From success to significance
- Through the SAAD lens, clearly

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Through the SAAD



The article's theme is loosely derived from a passage in the Holy Bible found in 1 Corinthians 13:12, which says: *For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.* According to English Professor Jonathan Lovell at San Jose State University, the phrase in its original context means that we necessarily see everything in this world imperfectly. It will only be at the end of days, at the second coming of Christ, that we will see the real truth "face to face."

At SAAD Program, however, plans, strategies, and activities have been purposefully and clearly set in place from the outset. Program management is conscious that any poverty alleviation campaign must give priority to creating meaningful and sustainable livelihoods in the agricultural sector. Therefore, aside from providing agricultural inputs, technical assistance, access to farm services, such as agricultural machineries/equipment, and infrastructure development (hogstel), any intervention must be accompanied by capability enhancement activities, coaching, and mentoring to fortify what had been supplied to the farmers in kind.

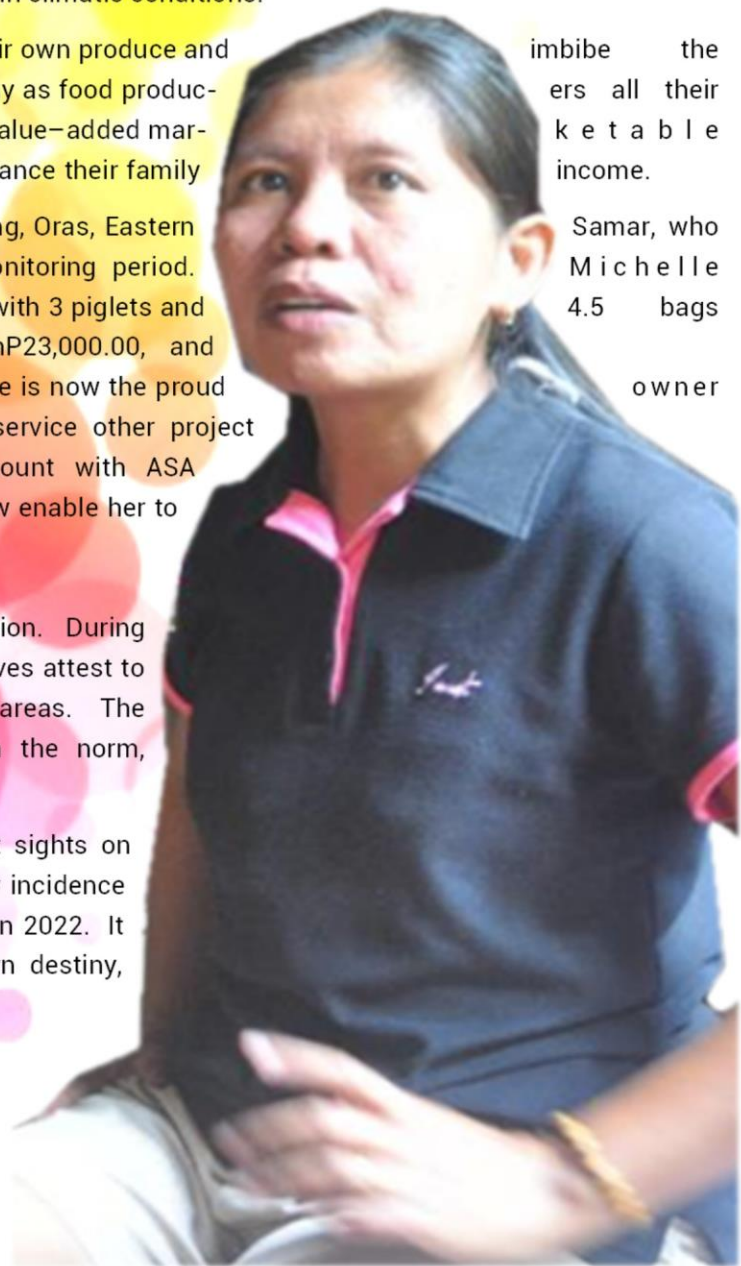
In the midst of El Nino weather disturbance, the program is ostensibly on the right track in providing farmers/fisherfolk with the means to earn alternative income. Intensified efforts to assist farmers cope with the dry spell/drought have been anticipated. Beneficiaries have been encouraged to engage in livestock and poultry production or cultivate hardy crops that can withstand the El Nino phenomenon. During trainings, they were taught climate change adaptation and mitigation measures to help them become resilient to variabilities in climatic conditions.

More importantly, these farmers are trained to market their own produce and entrepreneurial spirit. Intrinsic motivations are instilled not to stay as food producers, but continuously innovate and process their products into value-added commodities, and finally engage in business opportunities to enhance their family. A concrete example is Michelle G. Montances, 35, of Brgy. Sabang, Oras, Eastern Samar, who is into her 4th production cycle of swine fattening, as of monitoring period. who is a beneficiary of the 2017 Swine Fattening Project started with 3 piglets and starter feeds. Since then, she earned Php28,000.00, Php23,000.00, and Php27,000.00 during the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd cycles, respectively. She is now the proud owner of a sari-sari store that sells, among others, hog feeds to service other project beneficiaries and hog raisers elsewhere. Her savings account with ASA Philippines Foundation plus her income from the store would now enable her to purchase a brand-new refrigerator.

imbibe the
ers all their
k e t a b l e
income.
Samar, who
Michelle
4.5 bags
owner

Apparently, SAAD Program is heading at the right direction. During the recent monitoring rounds, affirmations from farmers themselves attest to positive gains in addressing productivity and poverty in rural areas. The projects are flourishing. If there are slight deviations from the norm, adjustments or recalibration are immediately carried out.

Through these cutting-edge plans, the program sets its sights on achieving its objective of contributing to the reduction in poverty incidence among farmers in Eastern Visayas from 46.7% in 2009 to 22.7% in 2022. It firmly believes that farmers have the power to shape their own destiny, given the right break and motivation.





SPECIAL AREA FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PERYODIKIT *feature story*

Volume No. III Series of 2019

The official publication of SAAD for the month of April

Issue No. IV



6 to 158 and counting...

The word "exponential" may well describe the remarkable growth of a farmer's poultry production project in sleepy **Sitio Cawilan, Brgy. Garden, Arteche, Eastern Samar**, which has caused program implementors, technologists, and other stake –holders to be awed by noticing its unusual progress.

exponential *adjective* (ex-po-nen-tial \ek-spə-'nen(t)-shəl\– characterized by or being an extremely rapid increase (as in size or extent) (Merriam–Webster Dictionary)

Neil M. Ladera, 49, is an unassuming individual who

was formerly into rice farming as tenant. Half of the harvest for every planting season was usually divided between him and his brother-in-law who assisted him, while the other half went to the landowner as his share. Frequently, the income he earned was not enough to tie over his family's finances until the next harvest, even if his wife contributed to the coffers by tending to a sari-sari store.



Hence, when the first chance to diversify his farming pursuits came his way, he immediately grabbed it. For him, being an elementary graduate was no stumbling block; rather, he saw this as a challenge to improve his lot, absorbing every opportunity as a way to better himself.

Thus, when he was chosen as beneficiary of the 2018 SAAD Program Poultry Production Project, he immediately buckled down to work. Initially, Neil received 6 heads pullets and 1.2 bags of feeds. The pullets he mated with a brood cock, which he owns. The eggs were then incubated naturally by the layer chickens, and the chicks multiplied exponentially and reached to 158 heads. At the time of monitoring, there were also 72 eggs being incubated by 6 hens at the chicken coop.

Even if Neil has not attended any formal training on poultry production, he relies mainly on his stock knowledge derived from raising roosters, native chickens, and ducks in the past, though not of the same volume and magnitude that he has at present. What he wishes for is to have his poultry inoculated against infections, but he was already assured by veterinarians from DA-RFO 8 that they will conduct vaccinations to protect the birds from migratory diseases. He is thankful that since the start of the venture, there had been zero mortality in his poultry farm.

It helps that Neil obtained a PhP10,000.00 soft loan from another brother-in-law abroad, which he used to construct an elevated poultry house and sustain the feeding of the chickens, consisting of a mix of crumble and layer mash. His immediate plan is to further expand his poultry house to accommodate his rapidly increasing chicken population.

SAAD Program continues to vigorously pursue its objectives by putting a stop to the culture of mendicancy – privileged endowment that has been instilled in the Filipino psyche since time immemorial, that the government owes them big time by providing for everything. Farmer Neil is a classic example of the opposite—a chicken farmer who flexes his limbs and muscles, toils and labors unobtrusively in order to succeed, and uses whatever resource, however small, the government has granted him by putting it to good use.

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Southern Leyte Native Chicken Production Training conducted on May 22-24, 2019

Racing Against Time

The late approval and release of the FY 2019 GAA has, to a certain extent, caused a setback to project implementation of SAAD Program. This supposition holds true not only for this specific program but, in all likelihood, DA regular programs and that of other government agencies as well. Operating on a reenacted budget up to mid-April 2019 slowed down the disbursement of funds, resulting in delayed deliveries of commodities, supplies, and equipment. Likewise, our planned activities, such as trainings/meetings, were moved forward, causing timetables to be adjusted.

With the eventual downloading of funds to the regional office towards the end of April 2019, there was renewed energy and a sense of urgency to deliver planned interventions. Farmer-beneficiaries who had been anticipating the promised commodities finally received their allocation and were able to subsequently engage in their respective livelihood undertakings. Capability enhancement activities and important meetings have been carried out since then.

As of May 17, 2019, most of the programmed interventions had either been fully or partially delivered. These include corn and vegetable seeds, farm machineries and equipment, farm and office supplies and equipment. Also, production trainings on rice, corn, vegetable, cassava, and pineapple (in preparation for the delivery of 160,000 pineapple

suckers) had been completed. At the RPMSO level, the FY 2019 SAAD Program Implementation and Updating Meeting, Harmonizing Meeting, and Provincial Assessments had already been conducted. Project monitoring activities were initiated to gather updated data/information about the status of project implementation at the grassroots level.

So, it is a race against time to deliver the needed goods and services. Choosing to engage in activities that are happening outside their realm of comfort, all staff have been mobilized in the hope of fast-tracking everything, from procurement, germination test for all seeds by the NSQCS, FDA particle testing for fertilizers, pre-inspection for animals, post-inspection for all machinery/equipment, delivery, and distribution to effect the timely provision of interventions to identified farmer-recipients.

SAAD Program believes it has the power to help transform the local agricultural industry by knocking down barriers, chiefly, poverty and ignorance, for previously relegated groups—the marginalized farmers and fisherfolk. Time is of the essence.



This Issue Highlights:

- Racing against time
- FY 2019 1st Quarter Provincial Assessment

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FY2019 1st QUARTER Provincial Assessment

From April 10–26, 2019, the five (5) SAAD Program –covered provinces in Region 8 underwent a comprehensive performance evaluation focusing on its 1st quarter of FY 2019 accomplishment. Using a monitoring tool with inputs, outputs, outcomes, and impact as performance indicators, the assessment generated valid observations, issues, concerns, and came up with action points to address the challenges faced by program implementors and stakeholders.

In each province, Area Coordinators reported on a per project basis, while the Provincial Coordinator reported on the overall status of program implementation. OPA and PVO officials and staff were also on hand to present the status of downloaded funds for FY 2016 and 2017. The RPMSO Monitoring and Evaluation Team was likewise present to critique and offer objective suggestions/recommendations.

What came out were findings about technical, operational, and administrative hitches that caused unwarranted delay/s in projects implementation. Absence or lack of production data had been identified as among the technical problems due to a number of reasons. On the other hand, some available data were found inconsistent because of differing interpretations and the process of computations. The field implementors require levelling off of understanding of the program's intrinsic goals and objectives, as well as a thorough briefing on basic statistics.

With regard to operational concerns, reports have it that there were still some unutilized machineries/equipment, feeds, drugs and biologics at the provincial level. As of the monitoring meeting, however, steps were already being taken to address the aforesaid issues. In the Samar Provinces, ma-



Northern Samar SAAD 1st Quarter Provincial Assessment

chineries procured under FY 2017 remain undelivered, but RPMSO maintains constant coordination with the supplier to fast-track their delivery. Also, replacement for the 144 dead native chicken intended for the 2018 Native Chicken Production Project in Silvino Lobos, Northern Samar had not yet been delivered, requiring intensive follow-up by the office.

PPMSOs have been urged to render assistance to beneficiaries, as in the case of the Rural Improvement Club of Lavezares, Northern Samar that is engaged in Swine Fattening Project. The ladies wanted to go into meat processing; hence, PPMSO assisted them by way of accessing training on meat processing to be conducted by DTI–Northern Samar. Further, the staff/personnel were exhorted to organize individual beneficiaries into groups/associations in coordination with MAOs–LGUs, and help strengthen them until they become mature.

On administrative arrangements, the liquidation of 2016 downloaded funds to OPAs in the three Samar provinces, affecting the conduct of appropriate trainings, was cited. In the formulation of proposals for future SAAD projects, Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Measures have to be integrated therein.

At this time when SAAD has already reached midway of program implementation, it is essential to conduct an impact evaluation so that any deviation from set plans/programs can be adjusted or recalibrated, and best practices shared and replicated in other areas. Results of the assessment shall become inputs to management in decision-making and in the design of future projects as well as to improve/enhance management of ongoing projects.



Eastern Samar SAAD 1st Quarter Provincial Assessment

CLAW

There is a group of happy women who bonded together to form an association that goes by the unusual name, CLAW, which is an acronym for Cansoso Livelihood Association of Workers. Based in Brgy. Cansoso, Matag-ob, Leyte, the group (consisting mostly of housewives who are also DSWD 4Ps members) grows assorted high value crops – *ampalaya*, *pipino*, string beans, onions, etc. – in a 2,000 sq.m. lot.

The germ of an idea to organize the women came from the Municipal Agriculturist of the locality who saw an opportunity to engage the mostly idle women in a livelihood project. The concept was thus supported by the lot owner and concurrent President of CLAW, Ms. Loretta S. Avorque. Comprising of twenty (20) members, the organized group complied with the requirements for DOLE registration until it was accredited on April 23, 2018.

So, this was how it came to be. Each member paid a registration fee of Php500.00 and monthly due of Php10.00. What initially started as a lending venture subsequently evolved into a thriving farming enterprise that brought joy to the members, especially after harvesting from and selling their first production cycle, and earning substantial income from it.

SAAD Program intervention consisted of 4 units each of wheelbarrow, bolo, garden tools (set), plastic mulch (roll), and 10 sacks organic fertilizer, while the assorted seeds came from OMA Matag-ob. Members attended a 3-day Vegetable Production Training co-sponsored by the program and OMA. Learning from this capacity enhancement activity was applied by them in their actual gardening practice. The members manufacture their own carbonized rice hull to fertilize the garden plots. Financing for the rental of a multi-cultivator at Php1,500.00/day came from the association's funds.



Members of Cansoso Livelihood Association of Workers of Brgy. Cansoso, Matag-Ob, Leyte

Production data report as of March 22, 2019 submitted by the association to PPMSO –Leyte, showed the group's aggregate income of Php70,239.00. The vegetables were sown on November 26, 2018 to an average area of about 200 sq.m. Each member tilled his/her own garden plot and was responsible for its cultivation and maintenance. Ms. Frumencia A. Aras became the highest earner, garnering a gross income of Php9,300.00 for having sold 155 kg. *ampalaya* at a farm-gate price of Php60.00/kg.

There are fifteen (15) members who continuously work fulltime at the communal farm, while some opted to grow their vegetable crops at their own backyard. The latter predictably earned less because some produced for their own family consumption. As agreed by the members themselves, a quarter of the gross income is allocated for lot rental and another quarter goes to the association funds.

Tangible returns include financial independence for individual members, which means no longer depending on kin for maintenance medicines, nutritional requirements and educational support of children, and sustenance of livestock and farm animals. Intangibles come in the form of camaraderie, goodwill, and harmonious relationships with fellow members, as well as the staff of OMA who continually support CLAW through regular monitoring, mentoring, and handholding.


The association plans to engage in a viable hog raising project in the future, acquire a vehicle to transport their produce to the *poblacion*, and neighboring markets to as far as Ormoc City where the vegetables command better prices. Also, they are aggressively soliciting funds from the program/LGU for the construction of a water system from a faraway source to the farm site.

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SPECIAL AREA FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PERYODIKIT *news round-up*

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SAAD Farmer-Beneficiaries/ASSOCIATIONS participate in Agri-Fair

Traditionally, the month of May is celebrated as Farmers' and Fisherfolk Month by the Department of Agriculture. Hence, activities that recognize and give tribute to our hardworking food producers are held to acknowledge their efforts and contribution to the communities they are part of.

One of these activities is the joint Regional Gawad Saka Search and Regional Rice Achievers Award where the most prestigious Rice Achievers Awards are given to highly performing provinces/municipalities/cities, Agricultural Extension Workers, Local Farmer Technicians, and Irrigators' Associations.

Another is the conduct of agri-aqua fairs where commodities by our farmers and fishermen are showcased demonstrating their productivity, and in the process, earning some income for them. In these occasions, exhibitors get acquainted with their fellow farmers, exchange constructive ideas, and learn best practices from each other.

SAAD beneficiaries are eager and always on the lookout for such opportunities where they can be introduced to the consuming public for prospective business tie-ups with entrepreneurs or larger markets. Thus, it was with this purpose in mind that the RPMSO 8 organized a booth for the DA-RFO 8-sponsored Agri-Aqua Fair at the Robinson's Mall in Brgy. Marasbaras, Tacloban City where products from different beneficiaries/associations all over Region 8 were displayed on May 28-30, 2019.

Sales of assorted vegetables from the Bulod Integrated Farmers Association based in Brgy. Bulod, Sta. Fe, Leyte earned for them a total of PhP1,876.00. Customers had a swell time choosing fresh okra, string beans, *ampalaya*, green & sweet pepper, and Baguio beans. Two (2) trays salted eggs produced by the Hinabangan Integrated Duck Raisers Association of Hinabangan, Samar sold for PhP720.00. Salted and duck eggs from Brgy. Cagbonga, Borongan City had total sales of PhP2,736.00. Bananas, *camote*, and sticky rice were sold by the San Antonio Integrated Farmers Association, Brgy. San Antonio, Basey, Samar for PhP1,220.00. There were also other products sold by individual beneficiaries, such as OPV white corn, macaroons, cookies, etc. Collectively, total sales of the booth amounted to PhP13,156.00.

In Matag-ob, Leyte, the Cansoso Livelihood Association of Workers (CLAW) and Farmers' Association of Brgy. Sta. Rosa joined the Agri-Fair held on June 4-7, 2019 at the *poblacion* proper, which was organized in conjunction with the celebration of the town fiesta. The CLAW booth won as Best Booth, garnering a prize of PhP5,000.00. Aside from the prize, expenses for the construction of the booth were reimbursed by the municipal government. What got the judges' nod was the meticulous labeling of the assorted products,



Ms. Hannah Aguelo, Ms. Abigail Buhay, Ms. Jocelyn Cabañas, and Ms. Rovelyn Timkang together with SAAD Action Officer Ms. Ferlynn Basañez



Mr. Elijah Victor Agapay and Engr. Iris Hayden Peñeda promotes SAAD during the agri-aqua fair

complete with their scientific names. The vegetables, fruits, and bananas were a sight to behold with their creative arrangements. Total sales for all products reached PhP18,570.00. The association members also won major prizes in the dance categories held at the culmination of the event.

In commemoration of its 59th Founding Anniversary, the Province of Southern Leyte held on June 27-July 1, 2019 an Agri-Fair & Garden Show 2019 at the Tree Park, Capitol Grounds in Asuncion, Maasin City. Dir. Milo D. Delos Reyes, CESE, OIC Regional Executive Director of the DA-Regional Field Office 8 cut the ceremonial ribbon and was the Guest Speaker during the Opening Program.

The SAAD PPMO-Southern Leyte was allocated a space for a booth where IEC materials about the program and other DA commodities were prominently displayed. Swine Production Project beneficiary, Ms. Virginia Montehermoso, who is a member of the Asuncion Farmers Association of Malitbog, sold four (4) *lechon* for the duration of the event. A total of 93 kg. was sold at PhP440.00/kg. for an aggregate gross sales of PhP40,920.00. Net income from sales of the delectable *lechon* amounted to PhP7,170.00. A recipient of the Duck Production Project, Mr. Nemesio Himarangan, of Brgy. Mauylab, Bontoc, likewise sold 10 trays salted eggs on the first day at PhP300.00/tray, earning PhP3,000.00 income for his efforts.

The power of small-scale but consistent initiatives by the program to help bring about change in the lives of the farmers has been manifested in these types of activity where farmer-beneficiaries/associations have become sufficiently enabled to market their product/s. Some have levelled-up to become entrepreneurs with their value-added goods; in the process, earning more than if they sell their produce in their raw state. SAAD Program continuously instills in its recipients that hard work and perseverance are the salvation of man that will deliver them from poverty and want.

This Issue Highlights:

- SAAD Farmer-Beneficiaries/Associations participate in Agri-Fair
- SAAD 08 conducts FY 2019 2nd Semester Direction Planning Workshop

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SAAD 08 CONDUCTS FY 2019 2nd Semester DIRECTION PLANNING WORKSHOP



It was “all systems go” for SAAD Program 08 personnel from R/PPMSOs as they trooped to Tierra de Milagrosa Resort in Brgy. Arado, Palo, Leyte for the 2-day Direction Planning Workshop on June 10–11, 2019. DA-RFO 8 top management were present to provide moral support to program implementors, as well as to offer helpful suggestions/ recommendations during the presentation of 2016–18 Provincial Accomplishments.

The activity was an opportune time to orient the incoming RTD for Operations, Dir. Larry U. Sultan, designated as concurrent SAAD Regional Focal Person, about project developments since the program’s inception in 2016 up to the present time. Dr. Elvira C. Torres, ARD for Research and Regulations and Dr. Andrew Rodolfo T. Orais, Chief, Operations Division remain as SAAD Co-Assistant Regional Focal Persons.

After the preliminaries, SAAD Action Officer Ms. Ferlynn V. Basanez proceeded to give the Overview of the Activity. She segued to the SAAD Goals, Program Plans, and Strategic Directions 2017–2022. Then, she presented the program guidelines, its covered provinces, and the respective projects/province. Her presentation was capped by the overall physical and financial accomplishments.

The presentation of provincial accomplishments took place in the afternoon of the first day, spilling over to the morning session of the following day. Southern Leyte PC Jocelyn A. Cabanas fired the opening salvo, followed by Leyte PC Jonathan P. Pantin, Eastern Samar PC Antonio B. Luceres, Jr., Samar PC Kristine Dorothea T. Danago, and lastly, Northern Samar PC Ferdinand Q. Ultra. The presentations were in the order of the following template: covered municipalities, projects implemented, number of benefici- ciaries, issues/concerns, action/s taken, recommendations, and program strategies vis-à-vis pre-, current, and post-implementation.

The comments of the panel of reactors were varied, yet they were insightful in helping clear doubts regarding interpretations of program policies and strategies, while at the same time offering suggestions to solve bottlenecks in project implementation. The myriad issues surfaced during the discussions, but the program top management threw them back to the field implementors as challenges that would measure their mettle as efficient and effective extension workers who are truly concerned about the plight of the marginalized farmers.

RTD Sultan emphasized that the farmer-beneficiaries should be the “poorest of the poor.” This was seconded by Engr. Jecela A. Demegillo, Chief, PMED, who said that even if there are

association members who do not belong to this category, the poor should not be disadvantaged in decisions reached by the groups. With the present focus on organizing individual recipients into associations, the new SAAD Regional Focal Person recommended that instead of forming new groups, why not reorganize, revitalize, and strengthen existing organizations. That way, they already have the basic foundation and structure. He also suggested to review presents strategies, and if there is a need to revise them to facilitate systems and procedures, then they should be done.

Dr. Jenny Lyn R. Almeria, Chief, Administrative Officer, commenting on the procurement and delivery of supplies, said that PCs/ACs should require strict compliance by suppliers on weight of commodity, based on contract terms and conditions. The latter also reminded the group not to accept deliveries beyond office hours or during weekends; but rather, to stick to office-hour policy on deliveries. There should be notice from the supplier at least 5 days prior to actual delivery, and for livestock, there should be pre-inspection on site.

As culmination activity, workshop participants were made to undergo Peer-to-Peer Evaluation, results of which would be the basis for management decisions on future rehiring and placement of personnel.

ARD Elvira C. Torres delivered the Closing Remarks wherein she congratulated the regional and field staff for their exemplary performance as manifested in the 2nd place finish of RPMSO 8 during the FY 2019 1st Quarter National Assessment held in Sorsogon City. She urged the group to help facilitate in liquidating YRRP funds by reminding concerned officials in YRRP-covered provinces/ municipalities about submission of lacking documentary requirements. Finally, she assured everyone of DA-RFO 8’s unqualified support for SAAD Program as it has set directions for the last half of the program duration.





SPECIAL AREA FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PERYODIKIT *feature story*

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FARMERS' ASSOCIATION OFFICIALS Inducted to office in Borongan City

Officers of the newly-minted Bayobay Livestock and Vegetable Production Association took their oath of office before a motley crowd of village officials and constituents, staff of the SAAD Program Regional/Provincial Program Management Support Offices, and residents of adjacent barangays. Brgy. Chair Maria Atable administered the induction of officers held at the barangay hall grounds, Brgy. Bayobay, Borongan City, on May 8, 2019.

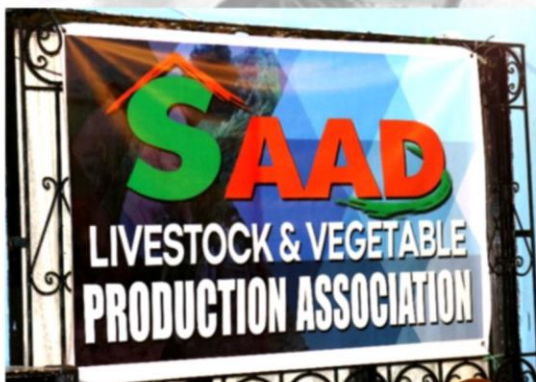
Association President **Jonathan Gesite**, a progressive, forward-looking leader, outlined his

plans and programs for the group during his Welcome Remarks. He emphasized the importance of the industry and cooperation in the fulfillment of the association's objectives. He also envisioned the farmer-beneficiaries as the prime supplier of hog meat and duck eggs for *balut* and processed salted eggs in Borongan City in the near future. Lastly, he encouraged his fellow farmer-recipients to cultivate common and high-value crop vegetables to supplement the nutritional requirements of their children, thereby improving the health status of the community.

For his part, SAAD Program Provincial Coordinator Antonio B. Luceres, Jr., in his Inspirational Message, thanked the farmers for their wholehearted cooperation in implementing the projects. He likewise exhorted them to continue doing their best in their respective endeavors because, according to him, the benefits will redound back

to them in their quest for an improved quality of life. He promised the PPMSO's unequivocal support through regular monitoring, coaching and mentoring, and assistance in addressing issues/concerns encountered by them.

The program was capped by the ubiquitous *kuratsa* dance common to gatherings in the Samar provinces. The ass'n. was able to generate income from the dance, which it would use to jumpstart future planned activities of the association.



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ASec. Lerey Panes, DA-RFO 8 RTD for Operations Larry U. Sultan, and SAAD PC Jocelyn A. Cabanas pose with UFAP officers/members.

SAAD *Swine* FATTENERS of SOUTHERN LEYTE attend Pre-SONA 2019 Consultations

by: Jocelyn A. Cabañas, PC-Southern Leyte

Six (6) farmer-beneficiaries of the Swine Fattening Project of the SAAD Program in Region 8 were able to witness the Pre-SONA 2019 forum, which was held at the Atlantic Hall, Waterfront Cebu City Hotel and Casino, Cebu City, on July 10, 2019. They are officers/members of the United Farmers' Association of Pangli (UFAP) in Brgy. Pangli, Libagon, Southern Leyte who were handpicked to represent the marginalized farming sector.

The forum, titled "*Tatak ng Pagbabago 2019*," was anchored on the theme: "*Patuloy na Malasakit at Pagkakaisa*." It was led by the Participatory Governance and Human Development and Poverty Reduction Clusters of the government. The 2nd of a 3-part series of events, it discussed the package of policies and anti-poverty programs implemented by the Duterte administration in the past three years in pursuit of genuine and lasting change. The present administration is keen on improving governance and enhancing the government's capacity to provide vital services to the Filipino people to ensure positive and sustainable change.

Key personalities who attended the forum include: Cabinet Secretary Karlo Alexei B. Nograles, Presidential Communications Operations Office Sec. Jose Ruperto Martin M. Andanar, Department of Social Welfare and Development Sec. Rolando Joselito D. Bautista, Department of Interior and Local Government Sec. Eduardo M. Ano, and Department of Budget and Management OIC Sec. Janet B. Abuel.

All clusters presented their respective policies, programs, and projects that provide broader access to education, employment, healthcare, and government

services to the Filipino people. Sec. Bautista, one of the presentors, gave updates on the Human Development and Poverty Reduction Segment. The SAAD Program was briefly mentioned during his presentation. An Open Forum with the Cabinet Secretaries and cluster officials ensued immediately after the presentations.

The Department of Agriculture belongs to the Human Development and Poverty Reduction Cluster chaired by the Department of Social Welfare and Development. Other members of the cluster present were the Executive Secretary, Cabinet Secretary, Presidential Management Staff, Department of Agrarian Reform, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Department of Education, Department of Health, Department of Labor and Employment, Department of Budget and Management, Department of Interior and Local Government, Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, Commission on Higher Education, and National Anti-Poverty Commission.

The UFAP representatives had an opportunity to talk with DA ASec. Lerey Panes and DA-RFO 8 RTD for Operations Larry U. Sultan at lunchtime. ASec. Panes told the group to always keep business enterprise as the ultimate goal of their project, think "out-of-the-box" strategies and solutions to problems, and create a product that will become the trademark of the association.

The farmers were glad to have experienced this once-in-a-lifetime chance to meet and interact with important government officials and other stakeholders.

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This Issue Highlights:

- Pre-Sona 2019 Consultations
- FY 2019 Catch-Up-Plan

SAAD PROGRAM 08

Bares FY 2019

Catch-up Plan

At the 2019 Banner Programs Catch-up Plan Execution Updates and 2020 Preparatory Planning Workshop held on July 18–19, 2019 at the San Juanico Park Golf & Country Club, the FY 2019 Catch-up Plan for SAAD Program 8 was discussed together with those of the regular programs of the Field Operations Division (FOD). Mr. Conrado K. Daluz, PDO II, presented the plan on behalf of Ms. Ferlynn V. Basanez, SAAD Action Officer, who was in an equally important engagement.

INTERVENTIONS FOR PROCUREMENT / ACTIVITIES FOR CONDUCT	Allotment/ Fund Allocated	OBLIGATION (in Php '000)				DISBURSEMENT (in Php '000)			
		TOTAL OBLIGATION (JAN-JUN)	Q3 Projection	Q4 Projection	Total (Annual)	TOTAL DISBURSEMENT (JAN-JUN)	Q3 Projection	Q4 Projection	Total (Annual)
A. Social Preparation Component	4,760,000	-	4,760,000	-	4,760,000	-	747,863	4,012,137	4,760,000
B. Food Production and Livelihood Component	94,721,194	68,157,265	26,563,929	-	94,721,194	47,500	63,153,584	31,520,110	94,721,194
Project Management Activities	27,188,806	16,283,688	7,922,410	2,982,707	27,188,805	6,991,932	9,894,079	10,302,795	27,188,806
TOTAL	126,670,000	84,440,954	39,246,339	2,982,707	126,670,000	7,039,432	73,795,526	45,835,042	126,670,000



Of the PhP126.76M total allocation to SAAD Region 8 for FY 2019, PhP4.76M is budgeted for Social Preparation Activities; PhP94,721,194 goes to Food Production and Livelihood Component; and PhP27,188,806 is for Project Management Activities. For the three (3) components, total obligations from January–June 2019 had reached PhP84,440,954, or 66.66%; while total disbursements for the same period totaled PhP7,039,432, or 5.56%.

Variances are projected to be met by the 3rd & 4th quarters. For the Social Preparation Component, the main activity, which is Strengthening the Organizations through Trainings on Values Formation and Financial Literacy (Organizing individual beneficiaries into associations), consists of 34 capacity-building activities, which will be conducted mostly towards the end of the 2nd semester.

For the 2nd component, Food Production and Livelihood Interventions, the balance of PhP26,563,929 will be wholly obligated by the 3rd quarter, and the balance for disbursements in the amount of PhP94,673,694 will be expended during the 3rd–4th quarter. The reason for this delayed obligations/disbursements is the second failure in procurement of various machineries/equipment, such as rice thresher, cutter, egg incubators for ducks and native chicken, knapsack sprayer, etc. The Technical Working Group (TWG) findings point to “no bidder,” “no AMTEC Test report submitted by supplier,” “2nd failure of negotiation procurement,” or other technicalities, which delayed the procurement process. However, actions have already been taken to address this particular issue.

Project Management Activities comprised of meetings/workshops/assessments, conduct of monitoring activities, and support to program management. Activities for this component, especially evaluation meetings, project monitoring, etc. will be held mostly in the 2nd semester; hence, disbursements will largely be done by end of this period.

SAAD Program 8, which is implemented in geographically-challenged and disadvantaged areas, has shifted its gear from providing a complete package of livelihood interventions to individual farmer-beneficiaries to organizing them into associations duly registered with accrediting agencies, such as DA, DOLE, CDA, and DTI. Instead of purely production, the groups will also be capacitated to engage in agri-enterprises for potential business opportunities that will add to their income and productivity.

Dr. Andrew Rodolfo T. Orais, Chief, Operations Division, exhorted the workshop participants to focus on 90% accomplishments vs. targets by end of the 3rd quarter, so the whole division is synchronized and complementary in its actions. He also suggested to update the status of accomplishments every week so there will be basis for comparison between periods. Finally, he recommended that a summit is held in November 2019, involving Agricultural Extension Workers (AEWs) and Technicians, for re-orientation of the division's functions, vision, mission, and goals.





The AGRI-PRENEUR MOM

Nothing beats a mother's motivation than her family's welfare. It is of paramount importance that the basic needs of her family, such as food, clothing, shelter, and education of the children, are met, even if it means sacrificing some of her comforts. It is a joy to behold the children grow up happy, well-nourished, and healthy because they are well-provided and cared for.

It is this drive that propelled a loving mother to venture into backyard swine production that was granted to her and other beneficiaries by SAAD Program in rustic Brgy. Nagaja, Hernani, Eastern Samar. Since May 2018, when the gilt was delivered to her, she has ascertained the proper balance between gripping poverty and prosperity, and has chosen to embark on the latter route.

Riza Caliba, 32, engages on almost all money-making ventures she could get her hands on to support her three elementary school-age children. She vends *kakanin* (snack items/viands) at the nearby community high school, provides manicure/pedicure services to friends and local customers, grows cucumber in her backyard garden and sells them to neighbors and friends, and being a member of DSWD's 4Ps Program, she receives a subsidy of PHP2,800.00 and a *cavan* of rice every two months. Her husband is an occasional laborer/construction worker earning PHP400.00/day, when employed.

Such is her gratitude to SAAD Program that she was chosen from among the long list of prospective beneficiaries in her locality that she gets emotional whenever she expresses her appreciation for this opportunity, which put food on their table, sent her children to school, and afforded her family some appurtenances of privileged living.

The assistance in the form of a gilt and feeds-grower, gestating, and lactating, were delivered to her in May 2018. For the 1st production cycle, the sow delivered 14 piglets on December 21, 2018, but one died. Eight of the progenies were sold and five were retained for fattening. The net income she earned from sales amounted to PHP27,000.00.

The same sow was naturally inseminated on January 27, 2019 when it showed signs of estrus. It again delivered 18 piglets, of which one was given to the boar owner and another beneficiary, as agreed upon by the project beneficiaries. From amongst the 16 remaining piglets, nine were sold for a total of PHP27,000.00, while seven were fattened and will be sold when they reach maturity. At the time of the monitoring visit, the original sow was again conceiving.



Having undergone a 3-day Training on Swine Production conducted by a *Pigrolac* technician, she is confident that the appropriate technologies on swine management she learned will see her through until she will have established a viable commercial enterprise. She recently attended an Entrepreneurial Training sponsored by Plan International in Maasin City, and as outcome of that training, she has decided to put up a store in front of her house selling livestock feeds. According to her, this will benefit her fellow recipients as the latter will no longer go to the town proper just to purchase feeds.

From proceeds of her sales, she was able to repair the façade of her house, which was destroyed by Typhoon Yolanda. An awning is now visible at the front where she plans to construct a small feeds store. She was also able to build an extension to her pigpen to accommodate her growing hog population. In the house can be seen some accoutrements, such as a brand new sala set, divider, etc., proof that the intervention has already created an impact, however minor it may seem, in the Caliba family. Next, she plans to make a major renovation of her kitchen.

At the time of monitoring, there was a feeling of hope and anticipation of good things to come. The husband now helps in the upkeep of sanitation and construction/ repair of the pigpens. The children are assured of a bright future as things presently stand. While Riza continues with her various enterprising ventures, she is guaranteed of a steady and sustainable income. From a docile housewife, she has slowly metamorphosed into an enterprising, empowered woman, whose determination to succeed is worth emulating.

SAAD Program continuously advocates for sociocultural and economically sensitive interventions that promote poverty alleviation, entrepreneurship, growth and development, especially in communities that fall far beyond the radar of the national government.

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RED Milo D. Delos Reyes (center) of DA-RFO 8 receives the Plaque of Recognition for RPMSO 8 for placing 1st in overall performance from SAAD National Director Bernadette F. San Juan (3rd from right).

This Issue Highlights:

- RPMSO reclaims top spot
- Streamlining the SAAD System

RPMSO 8 reclaims top spot during the SAAD FY 2019 2nd Quarter National Assessment



Consistent with its exemplary performance from 2018 up to the present, SAAD Program's Regional Program Management Support Office (RPMSO) 8 again garnered the topmost rank besting 10 other regions at the recently-concluded FY 2019 2nd Quarter National Assessment. Held at the picturesque Chali Beach Resort and Conference Center, Cagayan de Oro City on August 5–9, 2019, the victory took the Region 8 delegation by surprise as it was totally unexpected.

The assessment was based on obligations (30%), disbursements (30%), and physical accomplishments (40%). By point system, RPMSO 8 ranked fourth nationwide on obligations with 21.76 points; and fourth on disbursements with 1.60 points. What pulled up Region 8's ranking was the physical accomplishments, which, at 66.67 points, was way above those of other regions implementing the program. Overall, RPMSO earned 90.03 points to clinch the #1 rank.

In 2018, the regional SAAD Program implementation placed overall during the FY 2018 1st Quarter National Assessment held on April 24–27, 2018 in Marabut, Samar. At the FY 2018 2nd Quarter National Assessment conducted on August 6–10, 2018 in Piñan, Zamboanga del Norte, RPMSO 8 was ranked 1st in financial obligations and 4th in financial disbursements. On April 29–May 3, 2019 when the FY 2019 1st Quarter National Assessment was held in Villa Isabel, Sorsogon City, it garnered the 2nd spot as top performing region besting

other regions, except the Cordillera Autonomous Region (CAR).

With its newly-reclaimed position as top player in the SAAD firmament, the management strives to affirm its resolve to uphold the integrity of our farmers and fisherfolk despite the cultural apathy towards agriculture. Our food producers' life pulse with uncanny resonance, they who are confronted with gripping poverty but who plod on with uncommon courage, vision, and perseverance.

Let our farmers then not be the "mga limot na bayani" (forgotten heroes) as how the folk-rock band Asin used to sing about the teachers in the '70s. Rather, let their farmer-hero status resonate throughout the land, for we should always be mindful that majority of us cannot partake of a meal without the farmer.

TOP PERFORMERS: BASED ON OVERALL PERFORMANCE

SAAD OUS	Obligation (30%)	Disbursement (30%)	Physical Accomplishment (40%)	TOTAL (100%)	RANK
8	21.76	1.60	66.67	90.02	1
5	24.61	1.22	40.00	65.83	2
10	24.02	0.66	40.00	64.67	3
4B	20.81	0.49	40.00	61.31	4
13	18.65	0.74	40.00	59.38	5
7	17.15	1.82	40.00	58.97	6
11	8.09	1.22	40.00	49.31	7
9	3.29	2.03	20.00	25.32	8
CAR	21.78	1.01	0.00	22.79	9
12	17.56	1.29	0.00	18.84	10
6	7.97	0.04	0.00	8.01	11

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Streamlining the SAAD System

At the FY 2019 2nd Quarter Regional Assessment held August 15–16, 2019 at Hotel Consuelo, Tacloban City, several recommendations were pushed to improve the efficiency of SAAD Program processes and the system, as a whole.

No less than RED Milo D. delos Reyes, RTD for Operations & Extension Larry U. Sultan, and FOD Chief Andrew Rodolfo T. Orais were on hand to assess the current situation.

One of the issues taken up was submission of the remaining thirty-three 2018 farmers' profile of Leyte and confirmation of the 2019 farmers' profile. It was agreed that they should be handed in on the last week of August 2019.



RED delos Reyes, in his message, required the submission of expected output process and results relating to the Priority Concerns for the 1st 100 days of the Department of Agriculture under the new Secretary William D.

RED Milo D. delos Reyes

The report should have included SAAD Program's vision, mission, goals, and strategic directions; number of females, senior citizens, and PWDs benefited; poverty incidence; quality assessment–housing; and organized farmers' associations, among others.

During the reporting on FY 2016–2019 Provincial Status of Implementation, fast-tracking of obligation of the remaining 9.1% of the 2016 downloaded funds to OPA, Eastern Samar was pushed. Likewise the 8.2% unobligated balance of the 2017 downloaded funds to the Eastern Samar State University, which is intended for use in the conduct of commercial poultry and table egg production training. In the same manner, to fast-track disbursement, acknowledgement receipts should be submitted at once since disbursement is a key measure of the performance of program implementation.

As to the long-delayed delivery of native chicken for FY 2017, there should be repeated follow up with the supplier (Farm Savers). If it insists on not delivering the fowls, proceed with administrative remedy – have it blacklisted and terminate its contract with RPMSO. Then, coordinate with DA–Babatngon Experiment Station

for the supply of native chicken. Also, request replacement of the 78 head mallard duck mortality in the Municipality of Talalora from the same station's duck pool.



RTD O&E Larry U. Sultan

In regard to the late delivery of swine fatteners and feeds under 2018 Repeat Order for the Province of Southern Leyte, supplier GreenEco should get in touch with Sherwin Pontillas of RPMSO 8 and coordinate with municipalities that have available stocks.

On availability of supplies, variation order pertaining to number of poultry that the supplier can provide should be correspondingly made so that the liquidation damage is lessened.

For associations having best, innovative, and good practices (BIGP), consolidate them and coordinate with I–REAP of PRDP to help them establish an enterprise. To strengthen the capacity of Farmers' Associations, link them with CDA and other agencies to have capable resource person/s on values formation during the training–workshop. As to membership, either the husband or wife, not both, can be a member of a SAAD association.

Video presentations should reflect production and income per cycle and should have a narration.

For 2020–2022 plans, the insurgency areas included in EO 70 re: NPA–infested areas in Eastern Visayas should be considered. In beneficiary selection, select those who are cooperative and receptive to the project. Let the farmers decide on what they think their needs are in their own farm. Considering their varied experiences, we will then use our technical knowledge to validate their decisions. Always consider the area in relation to marketing of products. Lastly, there should be continuous consultations with MAs and FAs.

On the issue of SAAD Saga 2019, deadline for submission of scrapbooks and videos is 1st week of September 2019.

The continuous fine-tuning, streamlining, and innovations put forth in every assessment guide field implementors in their future endeavors, subsequently causing the implementation at the grassroots level to become more effective and efficient. In a dynamic and evolving system, such as SAAD Program's, regular assessment/evaluation is a must, as shared ideas and consensus–making initiate productive action.



Regional assessment participants pose for posterity

Qualities of a Good SAAD Farmer's Association



Since September 2018, the Regional Program Management Support Office (RPMSO) 8 has undertaken the status monitoring of different interventions provided to farmer-beneficiaries. During these field visits, the Monitoring Team has cursorily but keenly observed certain attributes of associations situated in SAAD-covered areas in Region 8 that, when taken together, would ideally make them stand out above the rest.

Not all of the qualities have been found solely in one organization, however. A group may have good leaders and cooperative members, but it could be found wanting in its recordkeeping. Or, at a glance, the association's documents may be well-kept and in order, but it needs organizational strengthening because there is disarray among the members. Hence, the Team has come up with the following list of distinctive features that, if present altogether in a group, would make it the epitome of a good organization.

1. Good leadership by committed, knowledgeable, and responsible officers. Farmer-leaders who may have knowledge and experience in managing an organization do not necessarily make good leaders, but if they are loyal and dedicated to the office for which they were elected to, are authoritative without being autocratic, plus they feel accountable to the general membership, these are attributes that would assure good management by its leaders.
2. Proper tasking of officers and members on different activities of the association. Each officer/member who is assigned to do a particular task commensurate to his/her knowledge or skill does not shirk responsibility, but goes about the undertaking with a cheerful attitude, always considering that it is for the welfare of the group.
3. Clear policies, systems, and procedures (PSPs). The PSPs should have been formulated and approved by the total membership, seeing to it that the words are comprehensible by all concerned. They should be fair, objective, and do not discriminate anyone according to personal creed, beliefs, or practices.
4. Recordkeeping, especially on financial matters, is in order. Documents-minutes of meeting, audited financial statements, policies, etc. are readily available, when needed, or posted on a bulletin board. There is transparency in financial transactions and in the records, and everything is aboveboard.
5. Solidarity/unity among association members. In good times and in bad, successes or disappointments, victories and challenges, the members are of one accord, never veering from the course, always guided by its


objectives, vision, mission, and goal. Continuous support between and among the members buoy up their spirits to face whatever hardship they encounter. They follow the maxim, "unity in diversity."

6. Open-minded members who are willing to learn, accept suggestions and criticisms, and be subjected to consultations. Members are willing to undergo capacity building activities, such as trainings, workshops, etc. to gain knowledge on improved technologies that they can apply on their endeavors. Even if the members "agree to disagree," at the end of the day, they still reach a consensus where decisions are meant for the welfare of all concerned.
7. Cooperative association members render regular voluntary service to care for, monitor, and report any progress/findings on the endeavor for immediate action by concerned committees. Fostering the *bayanihan* spirit, members are likewise ready to undertake scheduled *pintakasi*, or community cooperative action, for the benefit of the association.
8. Members promote their own product, thereby opening the enterprise for more business opportunities. Officers link with DA-Agricultural Marketing Assistance Division, DTI, NGOs, and other agencies that can assist them in marketing their product for more repeat orders or sales mileage. They also patronize them for home consumption and to meet the nutritional needs of the family.


A handful of the farmers' associations are on the road to achieving this status. Among them are the following: Sitio Lana-Sustainable in Life Farmers' Association (SL-SILFA) of Tarangnan, Samar; Cansoso Livelihood Association of Workers (CLAW) of Matag-ob, Leyte; Uswag Pequit Association of Paranas, Samar; Sta. Margarita Farmers Association (SMFA) of Quinapondan, Eastern Samar; Hinabangan Integrated Duck Raisers Association of Hinabangan, Samar; Samahan ng Munting Magsasaka sa Cagnocot (SaMuMaCa) of Villaba, Leyte; Bulod Integrated Farmers' Association of Sta. Fe, Leyte; Kawayan Agro-Fishery Association of Kawayan, Tabango; Rural Improvement Club (RIC) of Brgy. Libas, Lavezares, Northern Samar; Sabang SAAD 2017 Hog Raisers Association, Brgy. Pangudtan Swine Raisers Association, Brgy. Nadacpan Hog Fatteners Association, and United Goat Raisers of Oras, all of Oras, Eastern Samar; Domrog Rice Farmers' Association of Gen. MacArthur, Eastern Samar; Magsaysay Integrated Farmers' Association of Las Navas, Northern Samar; Lukay Farmers' Association of Alangalang, Leyte; Calbiga Vegetable Growers Association of Calbiga, Samar; These-Abled Persons of Tierra Esperanza Farmers' Association, Sta. Fe, Leyte; etc.

The number of associations that would qualify in the abovementioned characteristics will be known in succeeding months in light of the upcoming impact evaluation to be conducted on all associations engaged in the production of various commodities. This assessment to be held in the last quarter of 2019 will gauge the organizational capabilities, among others, of the groups. Results will then show a comprehensive picture of the state of the SAAD farmers' associations in Region 8.

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SPECIAL AREA FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

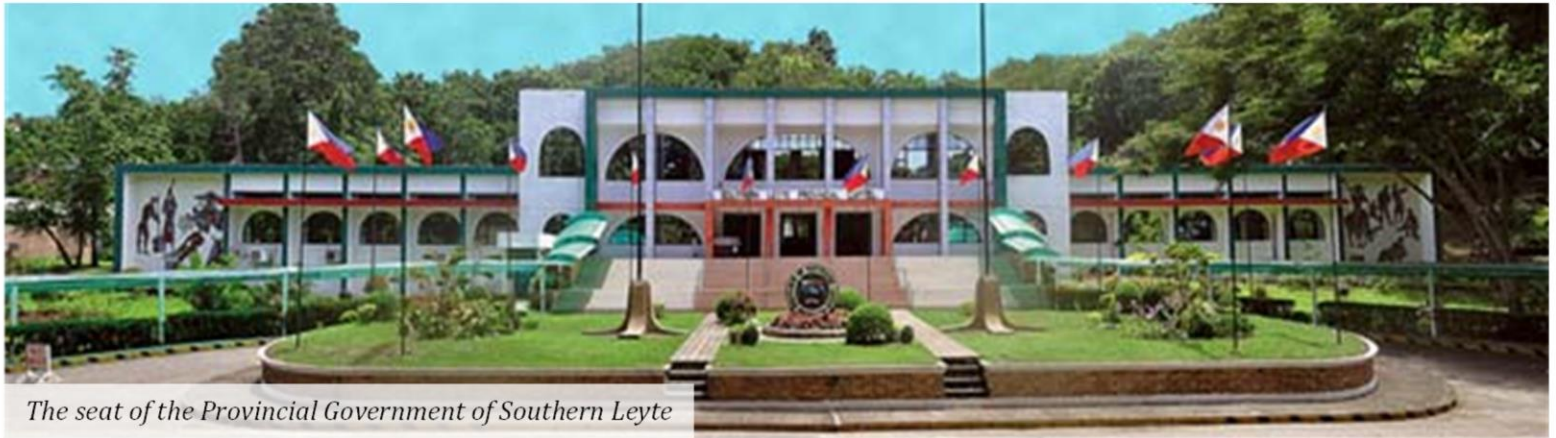
PERYODIKIT

news round-up

Volume No. III Series of 2019

The official publication of SAAD for the month of September

Issue No. IX



The seat of the Provincial Government of Southern Leyte

LGUs' valuable contribution to SAAD implementation

This Issue Highlights:

- LGUs' valuable contribution to SAAD implementation
- Equipping the farmers

Local Government Units (LGUs) at the provincial and municipal levels have been the DA's key partners since the inception of the Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) Program in 2016. From planning, implementation, monitoring, and hopefully, in sustaining the initiatives that have been put in place, concerned LGUs have gone out of their way to ensure that SAAD policies, systems, and procedures are facilitated in their respective areas.

On hindsight, in year 1991, basic agricultural functions and responsibilities were transferred to Local Government Units (LGUs) under Republic Act 7160, also known as the Local Government Code of 1991. It was in line with the goal of the national government to achieve economic development at the regional and local levels by decentralizing their powers and responsibilities in favor of LGUs.

The devolution of agriculture extension services to LGUs is viewed as a contributory factor used by SAAD field implementors in forging strong, mutual, and lasting partnerships with their counterparts at OPAs/OMAs. The farm extension personnel who are more familiar with local conditions, including customs, mores, and other indigenous agricultural practices, aid the SAAD staff in carrying out smoothly the plans and programs/projects laid out for implementation.

Contrary to common perception that government services in regard to agriculture frequently stop at the DA Regional Field Offices, hence, they hardly trickle down to the LGUs, much less to farmer-beneficiaries, SAAD Program implementation is the exception that proves this misconception.

SAAD Program serves as direct conduit through which various assistance from the agriculture department reach the farmers and their associations. The LGUs, in coordination with SUCs and other partner-agencies, do the rowing, with DA-SAAD Program doing the steering. This is a derivative of the 'steering and rowing' approach advocated by the new Agriculture Secretary William D. Dar, as he claims that the approach was proven effective during his 15-year stewardship at the India-based International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (Icrisat).

While SAAD Program initiates the activities, some LGUs had also done their share in seeing to it that good performance by farmers is rewarded. One of these was featured in the June 2018 issue of *Peryodikit*, where Hon. Viviane P. Alvarez, Municipal Mayor of Oras, Eastern Samar gave two (2) piglets each to the top three farmers who, upon harvest, obtained



PPDC Ms. Ida Sy Monzon

the highest gross weight. Another is the remarkable gesture by LGU-San Roque, Northern Samar, through Hon. Don L. Abalon, Municipal Mayor, that granted one (1) head carabao each to Hazel Socorro and Ramon Surio for having garnered the top two highest incomes within a production cycle.

In a recent interview with Ms. Ida Sy Monzon, Provincial Planning and Development Coordinator of Southern Leyte, she expressed her appreciation of the initiatives brought forth by the program. According to her, "One thing that makes the program stand out above the rest is that during project implementation, no burden is placed on the provincial/municipal government, because there are SAAD personnel who are directly involved in implementation and monitoring, unlike other DA programs that are just left to the respective MLGUs (OMAs) for implementation. Provincial/Area Coordinators in the field are equipped with knowledge and skills to give farmers advice and instructions on a day-to-day basis and attend to issues/concerns immediately."

"One Best Innovative and Good Practice (BIGP) of the program is the provision of a commodity menu, giving P/MLGUs an option/choice on what project/s to implement. They feel they have the leeway to select what project/s are suited to their respective areas and the capability of farmers to implement them," she added.

The importance of the program's partnership with LGUs cannot be overemphasized. The coaching, mentoring, and handholding by agricultural technologists and extension workers, in tandem with SAAD field personnel, speak volumes of their sincerity in reaching out to farmers in far-flung areas and rendering service as mandated on them. Functioning as resource persons in trainings/workshops on top of their duties and responsibilities, sharing their skills and knowledge during monitoring visits, and constantly encouraging food producers to plod on despite the challenges of poverty, climate change, dwindling commodity prices, escalating prices of agricultural inputs, etc. are notable contributions of LGU personnel to project implementation.

Hence, our gratitude goes all-out to the unsung heroes in the countryside – the staff and personnel of OPAs/OMAs, who continue to partner with SAAD Program, rowing in calm or turbulent waters, and making the lives of farmers a little bit more livable.

*"Masaganang ani
Mataas na kita"*

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Equipping the FARMERS

As part of SAAD Program's package of interventions, a series of trainings in the five-covered provinces are lined up for the month of September to November 2019. Targeted participants are farmer-beneficiaries, associations, PLGU/MLGU staff who are directly involved in program implementation, and R/PPMSO staff.

The activity, SAAD FY 2019 Farmers' Value Formation and Financial Literacy Training-Workshop, will be conducted in Palo for Leyte Province; Maasin City for Southern Leyte; Catarman for Northern Samar; Borongan for Eastern Samar; and Catbalogan City for Samar Province. A total of 34 trainings, each having 40 participants, will be held. Collectively, 1,360 participants will benefit from the capacity-building activity, including 1,020 farmer-beneficiaries.

The 3-day training-workshop aims to strengthen the farmers' organizations; guide farmers on visualizing their dreams and aspirations, such as things they want to achieve and what they want to accomplish, not only for themselves, but also for the community, province, and the country; have in-depth understanding of financial management among farmers on a personal level; train farmers how to create a budget plan, and how important it is for achieving specific goals in a specific timeframe; and train them on how to set objectives and priorities, which will eventually become their attainable goals.

At the end of the training, farmers will be provided with uniform budget management planner, which they will utilize in formulating their individual budget plans. These plans will then be presented in succeeding trainings for evaluation and learning maximization. The relevance of budgeting is that it gives farmers a perspective of where they currently stand, and what possible solutions could be taken without resorting to moneylenders. For, when a farmer's budget is in place, adjustments, and plans for savings become

easier.

As of press time, only the training for farmers of Arteche, Eastern Samar had been conducted, but others will eventually follow.

Equipping farmers does not stop at providing an enabling environment for the development of their mental-socioeconomic capacities. It further extends to slowly molding their mindset from use of traditional cultural management practices in agriculture to farm mechanization; hence, the provision by SAAD Program to associations of hand tractor, power tiller with multi-cultivator, rice thresher, rice cutter, rice reaper, rice weeder, cassava spinner, cassava shredder, etc. that would facilitate in their farm activities.

The peripatetic SAAD field personnel and competent staff of OPAs/OMAs are also ever ready to assist the project beneficiaries in handling concerns and problems that the latter encounter in their day-to-day farm practice. Coaching, mentoring, and hand-holding activities are regular functions of the staff, especially the Agricultural Technologists who have good grasp of conditions in the field.

Assistance in the marketing of products/value-added goods is another way of empowering the farmers. Referral to wholesalers, consolidators, *bagsakan* centers, trading posts, etc. and participation in trade fairs and agri-aqua events eliminate the need for middlemen, and thus farmers get a fair price for their products. Once they get introduced to the market, they would no longer hesitate to present themselves to customers.

Support for the farmer-beneficiaries will continue for as long as SAAD Program is still in existence, and even beyond. Until such time they are sufficiently empowered, management will not leave them hanging on a thread. Through honest idealism, solid underpinning, and dedication, the R/PPMSO personnel in close coordination with concerned LGUs vows to uplift the lives of farmers as their larger contribution to countryside development. The program advocates for socially and economic-sensitive interventions that promote both inclusivity and belongingness.

HULABTOG

The Spice in a Farmer's Life



Red/Green pepper (*hulabtog* in the local dialect) is one of the most important solanaceous vegetables in terms of economics and nutrition. Fruits of the spicy pepper contain high amounts of Vitamins A & C, Potassium, Phosphorus, and Calcium. It is best grown during the dry season from November to March, but could be grown throughout the year.

Thus, the vegetable became an instrument for a lowly farmer to travel the road to prosperity. Through sheer hard work, patience, and industry, Rolando "Lalay" Lapore has proven to all and sundry that adversities are not a stumbling block to success. He is a firm believer that "to those who persevere, will reap rewards in the end."

Lalay, as he is wont to be called, is a 47 year-old surrenderee who had experienced the hard knocks of life while he was still outside the fold of the law. He calls Sitio Mambahao, Brgy. Cagnucot in Villaba, Leyte, home. There, he cultivates more than one (1) hectare of land, which he had formerly been planting yellow corn, using 2 heads carabao as draft animal.

He supports a family of six with an average income of PHP2,000/month. But his earning hardly made both ends meet for his household, including 3 schoolchildren. Hence, when the More Income in the Countryside (MIC) Project of the Leyte Provincial Government was began in Villaba, Leyte in 2017, he submitted for enlistment together with his 36 co-association members of the *Samahan ng Munting Magsasaka sa Cagnucot* (SaMuMaCa).

MIC initially provided him with *pakbet* seeds, inorganic fertilizers, small farm tools, plastic mulch, sprinkler, etc. When SAAD Program was established in 2018 and provided the



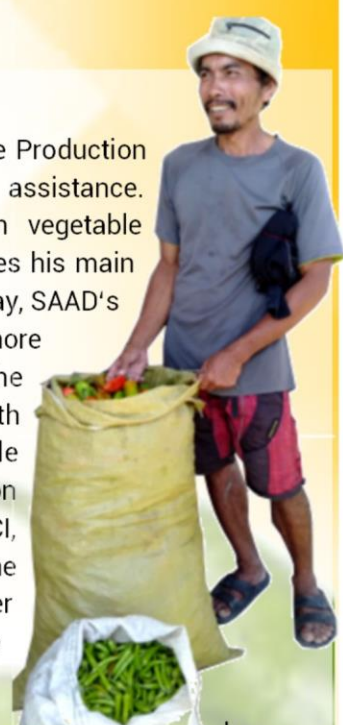
The farmer couple with AC Niño Roque Docena

association with a communal Swine Production Project, he also availed of the assistance. However, he is more focused on vegetable gardening for that's where he derives his main source of income. According to Lalay, SAAD's material assistance was more complete because aside from the usual inputs, he was equipped with Technology Training on Vegetable Production, which he attended on May 27-28, 2019 at PACCI, Palompon, Leyte. Additionally, he was given 10 bags organic fertilizer and 1 roll UV film, aside from the standard interventions.

From his original 7 plots, he has since expanded his cultivated area to 28 plots, 10 of which are planted to red/green pepper. For his first production cycle, he harvested a total of 328 kg., which he sold at PHP80.00-100.00/kg. Net proceeds amounted to PHP32,000.00. Market for the product was in *poblacion* Villaba and the VSU campus based in Brgy. Cagnucot. He aims to harvest his next production in time for the 2019 SAAD Saga event in Tacloban City on October 25, 2019.

Lalay puts top premium on education, for which reason he persuades his children to pursue higher education, having only finished fourth grade in elementary school himself. It is a 1½-hour daily trek to school and back for his children, but nary a complaint could be heard from them. Apparently, his motivation has paid off. During the last monitoring visit of PPMSSO-Leyte team, his pride and joy were in his countenance as he displayed the medals earned by his kids in school.

The allure of cultivating the high value crop is not lost on Lalay, now that he has realized its high earning potential. Life for him and his family has become more palatable, thanks to his green/red pepper production endeavor.



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Delia M. Babon and her youngest daughter pose in front of her former residence.



The new house of the Babon family

The HOUSE that SAAD Built

One of three basic needs that an ordinary Filipino family aspires for in life is core shelter. Next to food and clothing, it is considered equally important for a family to have a house of its own. Especially for a family having twelve (12) household members, owning a house is necessarily on top of its priorities.

Delia M. Babon, aged 41 years, and a resident of Brgy. Camanahagay, San Sebastian, Samar, together with her husband, is a proud owner of a house that was built through the auspices of SAAD Program. From her earnings, being a beneficiary of the Swine Production Project, her family was able to own the lot and construct an abode sufficient for her brood of 10. But that is going ahead of the story.

Delia and her family formerly lived in a rented house at Sitio Catadungan in the same village. They were into rice farming as tenants, earning PhP200.00 per day during harvest time. They also gathered nipa leaves from the wild and made them into shingles for roofing, which they sold at PhP600.00 for every 100 pieces. On average, the family earns PhP4,000.00 income per month.

The family was not selected as beneficiary of DSWD's 4Ps Program, despite having children of school-age and belonging to the 'poorest of the poor' category. Samar Area Coordinator Melissa P. Lacabe learned about this during her validation. The SAAD staff found Delia living in abject poverty, hence, she was chosen as recipient of the Swine Production Project.

The gilt was delivered in May 2018 and 8 bags of feeds (grower, gestating, and lactating) shortly thereafter. In June, the gilt was inseminated, and it delivered 9 piglets in August. One piglet was paid to the boar owner for the insemination service, while one died. The seven left were each sold at PhP3,000.00.

Income derived from sales was paid for the down payment of the lot where they intended to transfer, construction of a pigpen, and for feeds.

During the 2nd cycle, the sow delivered 12 live piglets. As agreed, one piglet was given to the boar owner as payment, and the eleven were sold. The sales income was used to pay the balance of the purchased lot, buy hollow blocks, and start the construction of a new house. Hence, as if on cue, when the owner of the house they were living in evicted them, they were ready to transfer to the new residence.

Even if she only completed 3rd grade in elementary school, it did not deter her from attending a training on Swine Production, which was conducted in Catbalogan City. She said that the training helped her substantially, especially that this is the first time she has ventured into this kind of endeavor. As with other recipients of the project in the locality, she also became a member of the San Sebastian Swine Raisers Association, which registration with DOLE is presently on-going.


At the time of the monitoring visit, the sow was again scheduled to deliver in October 2019. With her projected income, she plans to make home improvements and continue with her swine production. Further, one of the piglets she will retain for hog raising. She foresees a bright future with her home-based undertaking now that, aside from acquiring a new house and lot, she is assured of sustainable income to support her large family.



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Multitasker

mul-ti-tasker
 /'meltē,tasker, 'mɛl, tɪ,tasker/
noun
 1. a person who deals with more than one task at the same time.

Seldom does one meet a person who has a happy and friendly disposition that it becomes contagious to those who mill around him/her. The bubbly personality radiates warmth and an easy feeling, one could see that the happy person is well-loved by his/her family and community.

Lolita G. Caamud, 49 years old, is one such personality. A native of Brgy. Balud, Sta. Margarita, Samar, she lives with her husband, 3 children, and mother; and supports a sister-in-law who is dysfunctional. Prior to her becoming a recipient of the 2018 Swine Production Project, she used to be a fish vendor, getting her supply from Calbayog City; hired laborer during planting and harvest seasons; Barangay Health Worker; and parent-leader of the 4Ps Program in the locality; aside from her involvement in church activities.

Together with her husband, she cultivates a 1.5-hectare farm owned by her husband's family. She engages in production of rice, corn, banana, high value crops, such as ampalaya, eggplant, pole sitao, and pakbet-type of vegetables. She also raises poultry, particularly cocks, for the purpose of selling them when they become mature. Altogether, the family earns an average of PhP6,000.00/month.

She learned about SAAD Program from the Municipal Agricultural Officer of Sta. Margarita. Being a 4Ps beneficiary, she signified her interest to become an adopter of the provided intervention. After going through the vetting process, she was overjoyed to learn that she qualified as one of the recipients of the Swine Production Project.



Lolita G. Caamud, SAAD Swine Producer

From thence, she did not waste time. Lolita attended the project-sponsored Swine Production Management Training conducted in Catbalogan City. She also underwent a Food Processing Training as an option, should she decide to venture into longganisa, tocino, and tapa processing in the future.

On May 30, 2018, she received the gilt and six (6) sacks of grower, gestating, and lactating feeds. After insemination, the sow delivered eleven (11) piglets, of which one was paid to the boar owner for service rendered; seven

were sold at PhP3,000.00 each; one was turned over to a next-in-line beneficiary, a member of the Balud Farmers-Producers Cooperative (BFPC); and the remaining two, she retained for production.

During the monitoring visit, two of the sows were due to deliver in October 2019 for her 2nd cycle production. As fruits of her labor, she was able to expand and concretize her pigpens with the help of her son who has gone full-time into the endeavor. She also bought a brand-new refrigerator, which she proudly displayed to the R/PPMSO monitoring staff.

Her greatest joy, however, is in being able to put up a thriving hog feeds and sari-sari store, which is being patronized by other SAAD beneficiaries and even hog raisers from nearby villages. Pigrolac Feeds entrusted the supplies to her on consignment basis, for which she religiously settles proceeds of the sales every quincena.

Due to her diligence and good management practice, she was nominated by PPMSO-Samar as Most Outstanding Performance by a Farmer, Individual Category, during the SAAD Saga 2019 sa Rehiyon Otso Partners' Forum. The determined multi-tasker still could not believe that she has come a long way since her fish-vending days. Now, her aspirations for her and her family are just within her arms' reach.



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