



From farm to doorstep: SAAD farmer delivers fresh vegetables to customers

By Jay A. Ogaya / SAAD Masbate & Angelica A. Blanco / SAAD Bicol

MASBATE, September 13, 2021 – A beneficiary of the Department of Agriculture – Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD) Program vegetable production package now delivers fresh harvests to customers using a motorcycle bought from her sales.

Erlinda Llanto, a 56-year-old mother of seven, is a member of the Brgy. Ilaya Agroforestry Farmers Association with 55 active members.

The Beginning

In 2018, SAAD provided Nanay Erlinda a package of assorted vegetable seeds, organic fertilizers, drums, garden tools, HDPE pipes, wheelbarrow, and UV-treated plastic under the Vegetable Production Project worth Php41,963.00.

The interventions she received motivated her to pursue vegetable production together with her husband. The couple put their earnest dedication and effort in tending their 5,000 square meters (sqm) farm area. The project provided them with additional income source and access to nutritious food for their family consumption.

“Naghatag gid bulig an SAAD sa amon. Sa pag-panghatag ninda san seeds, sa pag-follow up ninda sa amon na mabuligan kami na mga farmers,” Nanay Erlinda shared.



Erlinda Llanto from Balud, Masbate

[SAAD gives us support by providing seeds. They also monitor us to really help us, farmers.]

While gradually learning the management side of their small-scale vegetable enterprise, Nanay Erlinda started to record her harvests and sales.

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Agta Tabangnon farmers from Sorsogon finish FFS under DA-SAAD

By Lovella Guarin/RAFIS 5



SORSOGON, September 10, 2021 – Thirty-two (32) farmers belonging to the Agta Tabangnon community in Brgy. Gimagaan, Donsol Sorsogon completed a season-long Farmers’ Field School (FFS) on Vegetable Production Technology on September 8.

All graduates are members of the Gimagaan Indigenous People Farmers’ Association (GIPFA), beneficiaries of the Department of Agriculture – Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD) Program.

The FFS is one of the interventions under the Social Preparation component of SAAD in collaboration with the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) to ensure readiness on agricultural livelihood management and empowerment of its beneficiaries. Likewise, this is a strategy to strengthen and improve beneficiaries’ agricultural knowledge and skills in ensuring improved productivity and sustainability.

A combination of lecture and hands-on learning, the FFS ran for 12 weeks which started on May 28, 2021. Beneficiaries gathered every Friday from 6:00AM-3:00PM to learn the basics of vegetable farming from seedling management, soil preparation (plowing and tilling), seedbed preparation, and Agro-Ecosystem Analysis (AESAs) including identifying beneficial insects and pest insects.

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SAAD distributes 800 free-range chickens to Sorsogon farmers

By Pauline Trixia D. Borja / SAAD Sorsogon & Angelica A. Blanco

SORSOGON, August 24, 2021 – Fifty farmers in Sorsogon received Php 1,124,000 worth of poultry inputs from the Department of Agriculture – Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD) Program as start-up capital for the Egg Production Project in Matnog and Sta. Magdalena.

The SAAD Program conducted two separate turnover ceremonies for the distribution of 800 free-range chickens with the assistance of the municipal local government units (LGU) who welcomed the DA's project for their constituents through technical and logistics support.

On August 5, DA-SAAD handed over 400 free-range Kabir chickens (two months old) to the 20 members of Hidhid Farmers' Association.

Supplementary materials such as chicken feeds, feeders, drinkers, net screens, and biologics were also provided to complete the livelihood package. The group will raise the poultry in a 1,000 square meters communal area.

During the ceremony, Municipal Agricultural Officer (MAO) Emmanuel De Guzman expressed his support for the SAAD initiatives. He said, "Naimod ko na danison ining proyekto na ini lalo na sa lugar palang asin urupudan, talagang mauswag ini. Kaming mga tawo sa gobyerno, yaon lang kami para mag gabay saindo. Nagpapasalamat kami sa SAAD Program dahil kami ay maswerte na saro sa mga nataan kaining mga manok na siguradong makadanon san saato kabuhayan."

On August 11, the San Eugenio Animal Farmers' Association consisting of 30 members also received 400 free-range chickens with feeds, feeders, drinkers, net screens, and biologics reared in the farmers' own areas.



"Kung dadanunan ta anay an saato sadiri, diri niyo aram na dadanunan naman niyo an iyo kagrupo nan organisasyon kay nagbabatog talaga an pag-uswag sa ato sadiri," Sta. Magdalena MAO Myra Escarda shared. [Success should begin within yourself so that your organization will also succeed.]

San Eugenio Animal Farmers' Association chairperson Ronaldo Favor expressed his gratitude to the SAAD Program.

"Sana pirmi kita magkasararo asin magdaranunan para sa ikauunlad kan ato manokan san ato asosasyon. Sa SAAD, daghan salamat dahil maswerte kita na kita an napili na mahatagan sin manok kaya atamanon ta ini san mayad hanggang sa dumaghan asin mag uswag," Ronaldo said. [I hope that we will always be united and will help each other for the progress of our chicken production in our association. To SAAD, thank you very much, as we are lucky to be chosen as recipients of the egg production inputs, therefore, we will take good care of them until they multiply and grow.]

According to SAAD Provincial Coordinator Mary Rose Detera, the two farmers' associations were selected as beneficiaries of the Egg Production Project because of their areas' suitability for chickenraising and the group's capability to manage their livelihood.

The groups were committed to sustain their livelihood project and assigned tasks for the members. It included monitoring of the stock to ensure the good health of the animals and avoid possible mortality, regular cleaning of housing, and preparing fermented plant juice and fermented fruit juice as a food supplement for the chickens weekly.

Prior to the input distribution, the SAAD Sorsogon team conducted basic training for poultry production in partnership with the LGU and MAO.

The chickens are expected to lay eggs by December. The groups are planning to supply eggs in their localities. ###



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Sarah Jane C. Taway
Pauline Trixia D. Borja
Jay A. Ogaya

LAYOUT ARTIST
Angelica A. Blanco

CONTRIBUTORS
SAAD PPMO Catanduanes
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About SAAD Bicol Newsletter

This newsletter aims to disseminate important updates on SAAD Program towards realizing its goal of poverty alleviation among marginalized farmers from the three (3) Bicol provinces covered by SAAD by virtue of EO No. 70.

For inquiries, please email:
da5saad@yahoo.com

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Her most recent production recorded a Php 41,230 sales out of her 804 kilograms (kg) harvest of assorted vegetables from July to August 2021.

Table 1. Nanay Erlinda's production income

CROPS	HARVEST PERIOD	VOLUME HARVESTED (kg)	PRICE/KG (Php)	EARNINGS (Php)
Squash	July to August 2021	161	20.00	3,220.00
Cucumber		168	50.00	8,400.00
Sitao		182	50.00	9,100.00
Ampalaya		293	70.00	20,510.00
TOTAL		804		41,230.00

She sold her produce within the community and neighboring barangays in the municipality by peddling.

About 40% of Erlinda's income from her vegetable production went to their savings while 60% spent for their family's needs.

SAAD's assistance, more than food for the table

Out of their savings, Erlinda managed to buy a motorcycle vehicle they now use in selling harvested vegetables.

"An gina-kita ko sa gulay gina-savings namon, tag binakal namon motor. Amo na an amon ginagamit pag deliver san gulay, di na kami budlayan," she said.

She and her husband ride the motorcycle to peddle fresh vegetable harvest. Their savings also helped three of their children finish their tertiary education.

"Dako dako gad an pasalamat namon kay sinda an nag-support nagdako an amon income, nakagraduate an mga anak ko, naka-tipon kami," Nanay Erlinda attested.

Preparing for the next cropping season, she also encourages her children to engage in vegetable farming. She plans to use the income from next production for the renovation of their house.

The project provided by the program allowed Erlinda and other farmers in the municipality of Balud derive income from vegetable production. ###

Agta Tabangnon farmers from Sorsogon...(from page 1)



FFS uses a participatory method of learning where participants can exchange knowledge and experiences in an environment conducive to learning. It encourages learning-by-doing, utilizing field-based settings for hands-on group learning. This fosters and improves participants' skills through observing, analysing and trying out their learnings in their own fields, contributing to improved production and livelihoods (FAO, n.d.).

During the training, the FFS also included special topics selected by the farmers such as organic concoction making or preparation of FPJ (Fermented Plant Juice), and FFJ (Fermented Fruit Juice).

Municipal High Value Crops Development Program (HVCDP) Coordinator Sharmie Guerrero served as resource person assisted by SAAD Area Coordinator of Donsol Mark Joven Barja.

For the hands-on part, the association utilized a half hectare vacant lot as a training site cum community vegetable garden where they planted eggplant, pepper, ampalaya, and cucumber. They were happy when they sold 17 kilograms (kg) of eggplant, which were excess harvests after dividing the yield among themselves for their families' consumption.

The graduation ceremonies held at Bgy. Gimagaan, Donsol, Sorsogon was honored by Dr. Mary Grace Rodriguez, SAAD Bicol Action Officer and Chief of the Field Operations Division.

"Magtatapos na kayo ngayon, pero hindi pa po ito tapos. Dito pa lang tayo magsisimula. Although may mga interventions na na-provide before sa inyo, we will still provide the farm inputs, farm tools, and planting materials para masimulan nyo na after graduation yun pwede nyong gawin para i-apply ang natutuhan nyo sa FFS," Dr. Rodriguez quipped.

During the graduation, Dr. Rodriguez distributed a total of Php 230,000 worth of interventions under the SAAD High-Value Crops Development Program (HVCDP) comprising of 60 bags of complete fertilizer, 15 bags of urea, two bags of muriate of potash; 30 each of bolos, rakes, trowels, hand sprayers, and crates; 20 plastic drums, 20 sets of garden tools, 15 garden twines, 10 knapsack sprayers, pruning shear, and brush cutter.

In addition, the graduates received assorted planting materials such as 100 calamansi seedlings, 180 taro cuttings, two bags of peanut seeds, two bags of ginger, and 10kg of assorted vegetables seeds.

Allan L. Magdamit, president of the Gimagaan Indigenous Farmers' Association, was grateful for the opportunity given to his tribe.

"Sobra kaming natulungan ng SAAD sa pamamagitan ng FFS na ito at naibigay din sa amin lahat ng pangangailangan namin sa pagtanim. Sa ngayon po ay marami sa barangay namin ay nahihikayat nang magtanim. Makaka-asa po ang SAAD na hindi masasayang ang mga itinulong ninyo sa aming barangay lalo na sa aming mga Indigenous Peoples," Allan shared.

Also present during the FFS graduation were Donsol Municipal Agriculturist Engr. Lindez Espada, Bgy. Captain Benjamine M. Arellano, Agricultural Program Coordinating Officer (APCO) Florentino Ubalde Jr., and Engr. Agnes Espinola, OIC Superintendent of Regional Dairy Production and Tech-Center.

For 2021, SAAD targets to conduct three FFS on vegetable production for the beneficiaries in Sorsogon, Catanduanes, and Masbate. ###

Catanduanes rice farmers harvest 82.35mt palay for the first cropping season

By Sarah Jane C. Taway / SAAD Catanduanes



CATANDUANES, July 14, 2021 – Catanduanes farmers harvested 82.35 metric tons (mt) of rice in their first cropping season of the year after months of agricultural rehabilitation through the assistance of the Department of Agriculture (DA) – Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) Program.

Rainfed Island Rice Growers Association (RIRGA) in Bagamanoc with 15 members and the San Roque Palay Association (SAROPA) with 50 members in Bato and Gigmoto harvested a combined total of 2,058.75 sacks equivalent to 82.35mt.

Tilling a total area of 36.60 hectares (ha), the 65 farmers from said associations cultivated the palay seeds allocated to the province for rice production under FY 2020.

Farmers harvested 20,120kg in Bagamanoc, 30,540kg in Bato, and 31,690kg in Gigmoto from April to May.

“Mula po sa natanggap ko na isang sako ng palay at isang sako na abono na binigay ng DA-SAAD, ako po ay nakapag-ani ng 47 na sako ng palay. Lubos po akong nagpapasalamat sa DA-SAAD dahil talagang nakakatulong po sa amin itong mga binibigay ninyo, at nakakatipid na din po kami kahit papaano. Napakalaking bagay na po ito para sa isang tulad kong magsasaka na nakatira pa sa isla,” shared Mr. Jose Villasana, a member of RIRGA from Bagamanoc.

Most of the farmers’ harvests were allocated for food consumption. Some sell their harvest to the National Food Authority (NFA) at Php19/kg, while others sell it as well-milled rice priced at Php50/kg.

From the 82,350kg harvest, only 2,910kg or roughly 3.5% of the total harvest were sold.

Table 1. Data on Palay Production of SAAD Rice Farmers for the First Cropping Season

FARMERS ASSOCIATION	LOCATION	LAND AREA (ha)	MEMBERS	TOTAL HARVEST (kg)	QUANTITY SOLD (kg)		SALES (Php)	
					NFA	Well-Milled Rice	NFA	Well-Milled Rice (50/kg)
Rainfed Island Rice Growers Association (RIRGA)	Suchan, Bagamanoc	8.2	15	20,120	-	-	-	-
San Roque Palay Association (SAROPA)	San Roque, Bato	9.10	23	20,720	270	-	5,130	-
	Cagararay, Bato	4.50	10	9,820	-	-	-	-
	Siron, Gigmoto	14.8	17	31,690	2,280	360	43,320	18,000
TOTAL		36.60	68	82,350	2,550	360	48,450	18,000

While some farmers had bountiful harvests, some SAAD farmers were not successful on dry cropping season because of the natural calamities hitting the province, causing damages to the crops and resulting in low or no yield at all.

To address this, the beneficiaries received 100 sacks of palay seeds (40kg per sack), complete fertilizer (50kg per bag), other farming materials such as laminated sheets, and empty sacks that are allocated for FY2021.

Table 2. Data on Distribution of Rice Production Inputs for FY 2021

FARMERS ASSOCIATION	LOCATION	LAND AREA (ha)	NUMBER OF MEMBERS	PALAY SEEDS (sacks)	COMPLETE FERTILIZER (bags)	LAMINATED SHEETS (pcs)	EMPTY SACKS (pcs)
Rainfed Island Rice Growers Association (RIRGA)	Suchan, Bagamanoc	20	30	30	30	50	1,200
	Kilikilihan, San Miguel	12	20	20	20	40	800
San Roque Palay Association (SAROPA)	San Roque, Bato	18	23	23	23	46	920
	Cagararay, Bato	7.75	10	10	10	20	400
	Siron, Gigmoto	20.75	17	17	17	34	690
TOTAL		78.50	100	100	100	200	4,000

Note: SAAD farmers are not beneficiaries of the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF)

The SAROPA members mentioned that the distribution is very timely as they are starting to prepare their rice fields for the second cropping in September. The free palay seeds and other farming materials are start-ups for rice production assistance so SAAD farmers can allocate their savings on other farming needs such as tractor rental, labor fees, etc.

By August, the rice farmers will undertake SAAD’s training on rice production. The training will introduce the farmers to efficient techniques to successfully produce palay, and develop marketing strategies geared towards enterprise development. ###

