

SAAD *vocacy*

The official newsletter of the Special Area for Agricultural Development Program

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Balanced Fertilization + Organic Pesticide cuts half the production cost of DA-SAAD farmer

by *Dianne Francis A. Sy*

OCCIDENTAL MINDORO, June 2, 2022 – Filipino farmers are greatly affected by the fertilizer price hike as prices started to spike in March 2021 due to the increase in demand for fertilizers worldwide partnered with a tight supply of natural fuel forcing some major producing plants to cut production of fertilizers or completely shut their operations.

As a long-time net importer of inorganic fertilizer with low feasibility of domestic production coupled with the effects of the worldwide pandemic and higher freight costs, the local agriculture and Filipino farmers were badly affected by the price uptrend. *Development p. 8*



EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES



SAAD PMO Assessment holds focused study in Catanduanes and Masbate offices

by *Jessamae Gabon*

MASBATE CITY, June 01, 2022 – In continuation of the Department of Agriculture – Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD) Program Management Office (PMO) Assessment, the national team was divided into two groups to simultaneously conduct the study which involves a total of 55 participants disclosing experiences, walk-through on the relevant processes, and describing the structure of implementation in the regional and provincial offices in Masbate, Catanduanes, and Sorsogon...*continue to p. 3*

SAAD ZaNorte capacitates ginger farmers through hands-on training

by *Aimee Lou D. Madjus*

ZAMBOANGA DEL NORTE, June 14, 2022 – Twenty (20) farmers from Roxas, Zamboanga del Norte, underwent technical training on Ginger Production to prepare for the management of Ginger Production Project provided by the Department of Agriculture-Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD) Program.

The project worth Php 1,696,650 was granted to the Mosica Pabalica Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Cooperative (MOPARBECO) in the municipality of Roxas. The beneficiaries usually cultivate corn and ginger while others plant coconut.

The Program in Zamboanga del Norte tapped the Agricultural Technician from the Municipal Agriculture Office in Roxas, Mr. Valentino Edaga to serve as a resource speaker in the training. He discussed the process of producing the rhizomes from land preparation, planting, irrigation, weeding, pest and disease management, harvesting, and post-harvest handling. The training happened on May 16, 2022 at Barangay Moliton Day Care Center, Roxas, Zamboanga del Norte.



"Ginger is popular for its distinct sharp and hot flavor due to an oily substance called gingerol. It can be consumed fresh, dehydrated, powdered, or pickled. It can be grown in flat to slightly rolling areas with well-drained, light to medium textured soil. It grows well even with 25-40% shading," Mr. Edaga explained.

After the lecture, the farmers were given a hands-on demonstration on how to properly plant the rhizomes. Edaga distributed pre-germinated seed pieces in furrows 30 cm apart and covered lightly with small-scale planting, and utilized coconut leaves as mulching material.

"*Ang mga mag-uuma naka tanum na sa mga rhizome atong ika tulong semana sa Mayo kay mao ni ang pinakamaayong panahon sa pagsugod sa pagpananom, ilabi na kay ting-ulan diin adunay abunda nga suplay sa tubig,*" said Ms. Abigail T. Malcampo, SAAD Area Coordinator... *continue to p. 3*

Director's note



A new chapter has begun. Allow me to thank the former Secretary for Agriculture, William D. Dar for his sincere and utmost support of the program. It was a serious obligation to navigate the nation, in times of global emergency, toward food sufficiency and security in the pandemic, and we endured and continued to persevere. We share the SAAD's achievement with him, for our current direction will not be possible without his support.

Looking forward, we are honored as we welcome the new administration, his excellency, President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. to the Department. As early as now, we admire his boldness in emphasizing and personally taking the lead to address the pressing issues in the agricultural sector. We hope to work together for the continued development of the sector, especially the marginalized, smallholder-Filipino farmers and fishers in the rural areas. SAAD has seen how vulnerable these communities are, as we work along with the local government units (provincial and municipal) to transform them to be entrepreneurs.

With these, we appeal for mutual support, like how it should be, to attain continued progress. SAAD, however modest of a program, continues to make its presence felt and seen, evident in the LGUs and individual farmers' requests to be assessed for coverage.

With the indigenous communities, marginalized women, the youth, senior citizens, associations and cooperatives of farmers and fishers, who work day-by-day to get by, and who contribute to the nation's food security and sufficiency, we embrace the renewed hope brought by the new administration, as we continue to hustle, and change the narrative of poverty for the sector.



scan this QR code to view the Midterm Impact Assessment Study of SAAD Program



Six FAs in Siquijor received chicken egg production training from DA-SAAD

by *Jolina Daño*

SQUIJOR, June 7, 2022 – Forty (40) poultry raisers received specialized training on Chicken Egg Production initiated by the Department of Agriculture-Special Area for Agricultural Development Program (DA-SAAD) Siquijor from May 25 to 26, 2022 to refresh and improve farmers' capacity for continuous management and sustainability of their poultry project.

Members of the SAAD associations – Cantabon Eco-Tourism Association (5), Tulapos Marine Protected Area Association (2), Paliton Vegetable Growers Association (5), Kinamandagan Farmers Association (6), Lico-an Siquijor Farmers Irrigators' Association, Inc. (11), and Cang-allas Communal Gardening Association (11) – took part in the two-day specialized training on Chicken Egg Production.

Before joining SAAD, members of Tulapos Marine Protected Area Association and Cantabon Eco-Tourism Association were tour guides; while members from San Juan, Lazi, Maria, and Larena were tiling their land with vegetables.

FY 2021 Chicken Egg Production Project

The FY 2021 Chicken Egg Production Project was implemented through the strong collaboration of SAAD with the local government unit (LGU) of Siquijor and the Provincial Veterinary Office. It has a total project cost amounting to Php 1,816,880 which benefited six groups of poultry raisers in Siquijor.

On February 17 and 18, 2022, the associations received the poultry input and materials from the SAAD Program.

Currently, farmers feel the impact of the project where the six FAs have already sold a total combined number of 44,622 eggs from February to May 2022 production. The project recorded a total income of Php 190,175.30.

Nestor Calibo, President of Cang-allas Communal Gardening Association

expressed his gratitude to the program. *"Nalipay mi ug dako anang na identify mi as beneficiary sa Chicken Egg Production Project sa DA-SAAD. Nagpasalamat pod mi nga abtik kaayo among mga barangay officials nga hands-on kaayo sa pagtabang namo especially sa pag gama sa layer house. Dako kaayo among kalipay kay first time namo makadawat ug project nga ingon ani kadako ang kantidad. Pasalamat pod mi aning training kay daghan mi ug nakat-onan ug unsaon pag galam sa mga manok."*

(I am very happy that I am one of the identified beneficiaries of SAAD's Chicken Egg Production Project. I would like to thank our barangay officials for helping us build the layer house. We are delighted because this is the first time that we receive this huge project coming from the government. We would like to thank SAAD for conducting this training. We have learned a lot, especially in chicken production and management).

The Training

Training session led by Mr. Ramir Chan, Senior Agriculturist of the Provincial Veterinary Office focused on the production and management of layer chickens and the prevention and control of diseases.

The training aims to provide the farmers with chicken egg production expertise, knowledge of poultry disease prevention and control, and management skills needed in the daily operations of the said project.

Aside from the DA Region-7 management office, Siquijor Provincial LGU expressed full support for the extension service activity.

Provincial Governor Zaldy S. Villa conveys continued support for the agriculture sector's initiatives in the province. *"We, in the provincial government, always support training programs like these that help our farmers raise the standard of agricultural production in the province. Through our program today, we hope to be able to train our local farmers on the best management practices for the Chicken Egg Production Project. We thank the Department of Agriculture for its partnership and we hope to continue working with you to improve the lives of Siquijodnons."*

Present at the training aside from participants were Siquijor Governor Hon. Zaldy S. Villa, PVO-Siquijor OIC-Provincial Veterinarian Jhea G. Manginsay, DVM, PVO Siquijor Senior Agriculturist Ramir A. Chan, Agricultural Center Chief-III/APCO Siquijor Gregolito E. Bunado, and SAAD PPMISO Siquijor.

As a way forward, officers of the farmers' associations are in the line-up to receive training on Basic Accounting for Non-accountants and Leadership and Team-building in the 2nd and 3rd quarters of FY 2022. ####

SAAD PMO Assessment...from p. 1



The first team conducted the study with the Catanduanes provincial office participants whose office is located within the Catanduanes Hilly Upland Development Station (CHUDS) in Virac, Catanduanes participated by 9 provincial staff. Meanwhile, the second team went to the Masbate Center for Livestock Development – Masbate Breeding Station Compound, Brgy. Asid, Masbate City and accommodated 13 participants for the study.

Through focus group discussions (FGD), and per-unit random selection of key informant interviews (KII) as methods, the national team hopes to collate experiences and practices of the regional and provincial SAAD offices in the program management aspect. Ultimately, the collated data will be the foundation for the crafting of a standardized PMO manual. PMO Assessment commenced in April 2022, which already reviewed Regions 12, MIMAROPA, and 8 management and implementation structures. This time, it is the Bicolano implementers' turn.

"We make sure our SAAD staff are exposed and are aware of the mother agency's activities, as OneDA, *kumikilos ang ating staff* to complement (the staff complements) major actions of the DA, *na-tatap at naasahan natin sila* (we can tap them [staff]) for

support," Dr. Mary Grace DP Rodriguez, SAAD Action Officer shared during the regional dialogue.

As mentioned above, located in the Masbate Breeding Station, the SAAD office in Masbate can be found in a relatively isolated part of the compound housing a total of 13 staff performing tasks from administrative and logistics support, area coordination, information and technology, and communications.

Agricultural Program Coordinating Officer (APCO) Wilfredo J. Nelmida said, "If you can see, *medyo* isolated ang SAAD (the SAAD office is quite isolated) for them to focus, because the nature of our work is immersion with the farmers from the far-flung and isolated areas, *nagfiifield sa* dangerous and distant areas, so this reflects SAAD fieldwork, at the same time prepares our personnel in Masbate. *Makasisiguro tayo na handa talaga sila sa fundamental activities ng SAAD sa ating probinsya*, (This is an assurance that our personnel are equipped in performing the fundamental activities of SAAD in our province)."

Concerns of the provincial staff center on finding the balance in the resources in their area and making arrangements despite uncontrollable limitations such as communication signal, and political weather. This means that necessary adjustments are performed to complete specific tasks assigned to the staff.

The safety and security of implementers emerged as some of the major struggles of the program given that it targets the most marginalized areas in the country. One of the factors contributing to high poverty incidence in an area is the presence of a localized armed conflict.

With safety as main concern, another essential branch activity, which is the technical assistance

(through extension services, regular monitoring of project status, evaluation of supplemental support, and holistic conditions/ adoption possibilities), where beneficiaries are ushered towards sustainability, can be hampered under the presence of armed and political conflicts. This remains true not just in the Bicol Region but in all SAAD-covered areas in the country.

In addition, SAAD staff's core concern lies in maintaining the quality of service that they deliver despite the quantity of areas handled per coordinator and the distance between each covered area.

While these are pressing issues in the implementation, the value of camaraderie and public service guide the structure of the SAAD Program in the whole region, hence, the staff are proud of how responsive and committed the DA regional office, its attached agencies, and the local government units (LGUs) are in cooperating in the rendering of projects for the Bicolano farmers.

The last leg of the study in Bicol will happen in Sorsogon where 12 participants will share their implementation experiences to contribute to the study. ###

SAAD ZaNorte capacitates ginger farmers...from p. 1



(The farmers planted the rhizomes in the third week of May since it was the best time to start planting, especially during the start of the rainy season when we have an abundant water supply).

As most of the members already farm ginger, they are expected to elevate their skills and have the chance to cultivate said interventions provided by SAAD with the newly acquired knowledge in properly managing their farm.

Meanwhile, some members who are coconut farmers plan to intercrop the ginger inputs. The cumulative land area of the ginger production project will cover four to five hectares owned by the 20

members of the association.

The MOPARBECO will also undergo training on the post-harvest of ginger. Through the coordination with the Department of Trade Industry (DTI), the beneficiaries will receive training on salabat powder (ginger tea) processing for value addition. Salabat is commonly used to help fight flu and common colds. Aside from ginger processing, the DTI will also equip the farmers with the labeling and branding of their products.

Eight to ten months from planting, the MOPARBECO are expected to reap the fruits of their labor in January-March next year. The produce will then be sold as a spice or will be processed as salabat (ginger tea). ###

Php 2.2M worth of SAAD interventions delivered to 821 Antique farmers

by Cedic Bataga

ANTIQUE, June 21, 2022 – To assist Antique farmers in cultivating various crops for sustenance and enterprise, 26 existing group beneficiaries of the Department of Agriculture – Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD) Program received additional support such as plows, harrows, and inorganic fertilizer worth Php 2.2 million.

These interventions were distributed on May 18 to the municipalities of Valderrama, San Remigio, and Lauaan, Antique under the components of Corn and Peanut Production, Ginger Production, and Vegetable Production Project Packages.

Since its inception, the SAAD program in coordination with the

local government units (LGU), has implemented various livelihood projects to provide farmers with additional income and stable supply. In fact, Antique has a total budget allocation of Php 91,711,946 from 2019 to 2021 aiding 8,061 members of 202 farmer associations. They received interventions from rice, corn, vegetable, livestock, and poultry projects.

The continuous efforts to enhance the beneficiaries' livelihood, contributed to the agricultural production in the region with the biggest annual growth of 4.7% recorded by PSA in 2020 (at constant 2018 prices)...*continue to next page*

Valderrama, Antique

Ten (10) FAs in Valderrama accepted 35 harrows, 35 plows, 200 bags of T14, and 10 bags of muriate potash to support the Corn and Peanut Production project provided to them in July 2021. These farm tools will help them maximize production levels (from subsistence to enterprise), cut down production costs, and contribute to ease of corn and peanut land preparation and cultivation.

Corn Production

Three FAs reported 446 sacks of consolidated corn cob harvest from their 10.5 hectares (ha) production area. This provided them Php 132,202 gross income in November 2021 while the remaining hybrid corn seeds were planted mid-March this year and are to be harvested this July.

One of these FAs, the Takas Imbanga-an Tangke Irrigators' Association (TITIA) story on corn production was featured here <https://saad.da.gov.ph/2022/02/farmer-earns-php-46k-from-corn-production>.

Peanut Production

On May 31, seven FAs also received 5,800 kilograms (kg) of peanut seeds which were distributed based on each FA's communal production area. They will simultaneously plant the seeds during the planting season in July.

After each FAs harvest, they will give back one-third of their harvest to the association, and the seeds collected will be used for replanting. San Remigio, Antique

Five FAs from San Remigio who are beneficiaries of SAAD's FY 2022 Ginger Production Project received 35 units each of harrows and plows. These farming tools are proven and will further increase labor

efficiency and productivity on the farm and likewise minimize labor time and various costs.

On March 22, 2022, each FA was provided with 200kg of ginger rhizomes to be cultivated in each one's 1,600 to 2,000 square meters (sqm) communal production area. The gingers are in the vegetative stage (approximately 21cm in height) after planting in April. The full maturity of plants is in 10-12 months from sprouting, and harvest is expected in February 2023.

Lauan, Antique

Meanwhile, 8 FAs from Laua-an received 575 bags of inorganic fertilizer as support inputs for their vegetable production; while 3 FAs were provided with 150 bags to support their peanut production.

Vegetable production

On March 3, the farmers received pinakbet seeds while post-harvest inputs such as seedling trays, plastic crates, pump and engine set, weighing scale, and granule applicator are set to be delivered in July.

The ampalaya, eggplant, okra, squash, and tomato, will be simultaneously planted in August and September to a consolidated production area of 31.5ha after harvesting their midland rice. They practice crop rotation, growing different kinds of crops such as rice, peanut, and vegetable in recurrent sessions on the same land. Peanut production

The 3 FAs will receive 4,750kg of peanut seeds in July during its planting season. This will be cultivated to a total area of 32.15ha.

These inputs serve as starting capital to the 821 farmers, alongside extension services such as training on crops management, capability building, technical writing, and simple bookkeeping.

Present during the delivery of the inputs were SAAD Regional Staff Reah Garduce, and Antique Area Coordinators Elvin Acosta, Christine Joy Teodoro, and Jessa Joaquin. ###



2 Apayao FAs persevere in egg enterprise

by Kathleen Faye B. Agonoy

APAYAO, June 16, 2022 – Two Farmers Associations (FAs) in the Municipality of Luna, Apayao have earned a total of Php 43,165 from the Chicken and Egg Production Project of the Department of Agriculture- Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) Program.

The inputs provided are part of SAAD's Free-range Chicken Egg Production Project funded in FY 2021 amounting to Php 2,778,780. The package is composed of 2,850 free-range chickens and supplementary poultry inputs such as grower mash, layer mash, multi-vitamins, egg trays, drinker, and poultry net.

In August 2021, the program implemented the project where the recipients are farmers from the Upstream Livelihood Farmers Association (ULFA) with 25 members and Midstream Livelihood Farmers Association (MLFA) with 45 members. The beneficiaries, whose source of income is by growing varied crops like vegetables, corn, and rice, hope that the poultry project will help them earn and save money for the education of their children.

Results

According to Ms. Verna Capan, Project Development Officer of SAAD Provincial Program Monitoring Support Office (PPMSO) in Apayao, the groups were able to accumulate additional sources of income three months after project implementation.

"Kalpasan iti mano nga bulan nga naited detuy nga livelihood project, nakita mi iti impact na iti effort mi nga maysa nga grupo. Han lang nga nakatulong kami iti members nu di kitai nakatulong kami pay iti community nga addaan iti food supply para consumption," (After months of providing us with livelihood project, we were able to

witness the impact of our efforts as a group. It didn't just help the members but also helped the community when it comes to food supply for consumption), expressed Ms. Maxima Camayang, President of ULFA.

She also added that the FAs are selling their farm produce to nearby barangays and towns proper.

According to Ms. Camayang, because of SAAD, a sense of unity sparked among farmers, in achieving a common goal which is to alleviate their living status from poverty. The beneficiaries hope that the poultry project will help them earn and save money for the education of their children.

Last March, ULFA and MLFA were rated among the highest and outstanding 45 FAs in the province by the PPMSO in partnership with the Municipal Local Government Unit that conducts its Organizational Development and Management. With this, the program hopes that the associations will continue to prosper in agripreneurship if SAAD Phase-2 shall be granted.

Policy and Plans

As agreed, each member is required to contribute at least 1 tray of eggs per month to generate additional income as a group.

SAAD Apayao will be endorsing these associations to LGU for additional partnership among government agencies such as the Technical Education and Skill Development Authority (TESDA) and Department of Science and Technology (DOST) for additional training in marketing. ###

Sablayan farmers receive Php 1.1M corn production package from DA-SAAD

by Dianne Francis A. Sy

OCCIDENTAL MINDORO, June 22, 2022 – The Department of Agriculture – Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD) awarded Php 1,106,856 worth of planting materials to 116 indigenous people and Tagalog beneficiaries to boost corn production of farmers in the newly identified area.

Nearing conclusion, the DA-SAAD MIMAROPA hopes to maximize the program by expanding areas and accommodating new beneficiaries that will receive livelihood provisions, extension services, and technical support. In 2022, 26 livelihood projects are in the pipeline for the two (2) newly covered municipalities that are projected to assist 751 new farmers in OccMin.

One of the expansion areas is Sablayan, a first-class municipality and the largest in Occidental Mindoro. It is home to Alangan and Tau-Buhid-Mangyan, where locals do farming and fishing as major sources of income, utilizing the coastal areas and wide agricultural lands. Aside from rice, corn is one of the major crops grown in the lowlands of the municipality.

The Alangan-Mangyan corn farmers of Samahan ng Katutubo Magsasaka sa Kulasasi at Kumiray (SAKAMAKU) with 56 members will benefit from 74 sacks of Hybrid Yellow Corn seeds and three (3) units of pump and engine for their production in an estimated land area of 50 hectares of corn plantation.

Meanwhile, 73 bags of corn seeds and three units of pump and engine were awarded to Cigaras Irrigators Farmers Association (CIFA) consisting of 60 Tagalog farmers cultivating a cumulative area of 80ha, also for corn production.

CIFA was registered as a legitimate association under the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) in



2017 and SAKAMAKU in 2019. SAAD consulted with Sablayan LGU in 2021 to identify suitable livelihood projects for farmers in the municipality.

In 2022, both associations were identified to be part of the SAAD program's expansion in the province along with other newly-formed groups in Sablayan and Calintaan.

According to Mr. Oliver B. Cosme, SAAD Area Coordinator of Sablayan, the delivery of seeds was timely for the planting season. Farmers have started land preparation while others just finished theirs, waiting for seeds. The intervention includes a pump and engine machine addressing the need for consistent water sources for the farmers' cultivation.

Mr. Romulo Ramos, Chairperson of CIFA expressed his gratitude as it was the association's first time receiving farm equipment, *"ito ang unang beses na nakatanggap kami ng makina. Matagal na kaming hirap*

sa patubig dahil umaasa lang kami sa buhos ulan saka sa ilog. Malaking tulong ito para sa amin."

(This is the first time that we have received farm machinery. Irrigation has been difficult for us because we only rely for rain and the river for water supply. [The equipment] will be helpful for our group.)

The Office of the Municipal Agriculturist (OMA) of Sablayan assisted with the turnover activity headed by the Municipal Agriculturist Mr. Reynaldo Factor and staff.

Preparations for corn production training and other capacity-building activities for the new beneficiaries are ongoing.

Members of SAKAMAKU and CIFA are situated in Brgy. Batong Buhay and Brgy. Imita which are identified as End Local Communist Armed Conflict (ELCAC) areas in Occidental Mindoro. ###

TOWARDS CBES

Egg Layer project – an additional source of income for Tomas Oppus farmers

by Rovelyn Timkang

SOUTHERN LEYTE, June 6, 2022 – The Department of Agriculture – Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD) Egg Layer Project in Tomas Oppus, Southern Leyte provides additional income to farmers to recuperate from effects of Typhoon Odette.

Magpag Farmers Association (MAFA) is a Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) registered farmers association (FA) and an active rural-based group in the municipality of Tomas Oppus. Currently, the FA has 25 active members composed of small-scale vegetable, root-crop, and copra farmers with monthly income ranging from Php 4,500 to Php 5,000.

Through active participation in local government units (LGU)-based programs implemented by the office of



Municipal Agriculturist Services, the FA was recommended by the Municipal Agriculturist, Melona P. Caritan to the SAAD Program.

In 2021, SAAD Southern Leyte conducted a needs assessment, validation, and profiling where the FA qualified as one of the four (4) group beneficiaries in the province for the Egg Layer Production and Marketing project worth Php 7,443,000.

MAFA then received the package of intervention for the Egg Layer Project worth Php 1,860,750 on

August 17, 2021.

Though the FA was initially uncertain since it was their first time managing an Egg Layer Project, they were able to apply the skills learned from various training provided by the staff of the Provincial Veterinary Office and SAAD on effective management of the interventions.

Project Implementation

During MAFA's first quarter of production in 2021, before the

catastrophic super Typhoon Odette, the group had higher egg production and collected 28-31 trays daily at 30 eggs/tray. The prices per tray of eggs vary depending on sizes (Small-Php 150, Medium-Php 170, Large-Php 190, X-Large -Php 200, Jumbo-Php 220, Cracks -Php 120). The association gained a total gross income of Php 854,168.99 for eight (8) months of operation.

After the devastation brought by super Typhoon Odette in Southern Leyte, the group can only collect 22-24 trays per day as 40 head of layer chicken died when the poultry house collapsed during the calamity.

As of April 2022, the FA spent Php 48,900 from their gross income for re-construction of the facility of the RTLs. MAFA also plans on expanding the project by adding 400 head of RTL before September 2022, as demand for eggs increases in preparation for the Christmas season...*continue to next page*

According to MAFA's member Mrs. Milagrosa Francisco, "Daku mi ug pasamat sa Ginoo tungod sa iyang ka maayo nga bisan pa sa tanan nga amoa nasugatan nga problema ug kalisud ang iyang panalangin naa permi. Ug ang SAAD nahimo nga usa sa mga panalangin nga iyaha gihatg namu. Ug sa baylo, amoa paningkamotan nga masustenar ang maong programa."

(We are grateful to our almighty God for He is so good to us. Though we were scourged by different dilemmas, still he blessed us continually and SAAD is one of the blessings that he has given us. With this, we will do our best to sustain the said program.)

MAFA members are dedicated in working together and sustaining the project for succeeding cycles to provide additional income to members. Currently, the FA saves 10% of their net income for capital buildup that they can use in the future.

MAFA aims to be self-sufficient in their operations to have minimal to full independence from government aid, especially for rehabilitation of areas hit by calamities. With the help of the SAAD Program, the needs of every household are sure to be filled up. ###

DIRECTOR IN ACTION

SAAD National Director visits beneficiaries in Bohol

by Jolina Daño

BOHOL, June 9, 2022 – The Department of Agriculture-Special Area for Agricultural Development Program (DA-SAAD) National Program Director Myer G. Mula visited eight (8) farmers' associations (FAs) and two (2) federated farmers associations in Bohol to monitor existing SAAD livelihood projects in the province between June 6 to 8, 2022.

June 6: Agriculture and Fisheries Monitoring

DA-SAAD (Agriculture)

Director Mula met with DA-SAAD Provincial Program Management Support Office (PPMSO), Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), and Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority (FPA) personnel in Bohol on June 6, 2022.

During the briefing at Provincial Agricultural Technology Coordinating Office (PATCO) Bohol, the director's field visit was scheduled to maximize areas of interest, and for the farmers to personally meet and join the consultation with the program chief. His activities entail monitoring of farmers and fisherfolk activities, turnover of remaining SAAD projects in the province, and visiting Typhoon Odette-affected projects. Issues facing the farmers and fisherfolk were also raised to the director for recommendations and best possible solution.

Among the issues raised was the low population of carabaos where

Director Mula recommended the establishment of a multiplier farm with forage development to address the need for bull repopulation under the carabao project received in 2020. He added to include breeders or bulls in the procurement with the carabeifers.

Provincial Agriculturist Dr. Larry Pamugas suggested improving the artificial insemination method at the municipal level with the assistance of livestock technicians to help the farmers in carabao repopulation.

In response, to address the farmers' problems in breeding and push for multiplier activity, the regional implementers will draft proposals for supplementary support, and craft ways for smooth and accessible project monitoring. Action will begin in a careful review of the SAAD guidelines for multiplier farms and looking for a possible source of funds to support the farmers with their needs.

In Bohol, there are 1,065 beneficiaries from 41 associations who benefited from five projects on Integrated Carabao and Vegetable Production, Native Chicken Production, Corn-Peanut Production, and Banana-Sweet Potato Production implemented in the municipalities of Pres. Carlos P. Garcia (9), Getafe (7), Bien Unido (7), Buenavista (9), and Mabini (9). The FPA-7 Regional Officer Arnulfo L. Arausa Jr. and his team will also conduct orientation and consultation with farmers regarding fertilizer and pesticide-related



issues that will introduce balanced fertilization strategy and utilization of pesticides.

BFAR-SAAD (Fisheries)

Though the BFAR – SAAD funding of interventions in Bohol lasted from 2019- 2021, project monitoring is continuously implemented to guarantee flourishing of fisherfolks' projects in the province.

Inahan sa Kanunay'ng Panabang Cibucaw Fisherfolk Association (IKPCFA)

Dir. Mula met with the fishermen from Inahan sa Kanunay'ng Panabang Cibucaw Fisherfolk Association (IKPCFA) (45 members) in Dausi, Bohol.

BFAR-SAAD has provided 80 fishermen in the municipality of Dausi with fiber boats and drift gillnets worth Php 3,609,573 from 2019-2021.

The program provided IKPCFA members with 22-foot fiber boats and fishnets to help them earn a living. However, when typhoon Odette struck Bohol in December 2021, interventions from the program were greatly damaged which hampered the fishing activities of the FA.

To support and feed their families, the majority of the beneficiaries temporarily worked as laborers in the market and in construction sites. Currently, the FA's source of income is from the rent of camalig/shore cottages (earning up to Php 600 per cottage).

Since most of the fisherfolk have not yet recovered from the damage of the typhoon, they will install floating cottage as an additional income-generating means for the association within the year.

In the dialogue with the beneficiaries, the SAAD chief and BFAR Officer-in-Charge Provincial Fishery Officer Candido Samijon suggested to establish a seasonal seaweed

farming as an additional income-generating project. They are encouraged to request permission from the barangay and the municipality level through the assigned technician for open zoning of proposed seaweed farming.

Seaweeds are valued at Php 60-100 per kilo depending on the product, which they can sell fresh or dried.

Looc Coastal Development Association

The Looc Fishermen Association with 62 members benefited from the Bangus Culture in Marine-Floating Fish Cages Project in 2019. They received materials for fish cage, fingerlings, and feeds for one cycle production with a total project cost of Php 270,000 each.

Aside from IKPCFA, the Looc Coastal Development Association (11 active members out of 62 members) in Calape was also visited by the director.

Prior to typhoon Odette, fisherfolks purchased materials for fish cage construction sourced from their 2020 income. However, the 10x10 fish cage unit was destroyed by Odette.

BFAR Bohol has reported a Php 800,000-worth of damage to SAAD projects caused by the typhoon Odette. Currently, they are taking actions to revive the mariculture in the area and restore the damages that affected the livelihood of fishermen.

The National Mariculture Center has seen the municipality of Calape as a satellite office because of its location and area, according to BFAR Bohol Director. Mariculture or marine agriculture refers to the culture of fishes in cages in marine environments. ###

Bohol Inter-agency cooperation strengthens through Director's visit

by Jessamae Gabon

BOHOL, June 10, 2022 – In pursuit of strengthening local partnerships, the Department of Agriculture – Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD) Program Director Myer G. Mula paid a courtesy visit to Buenavista, Bohol local government executives along with two DA offices reassuring continued support to Boholano farmers and fishers' constituents.

On June 7, 2022, Director Mula, with representatives from the Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority (FPA), and Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), met with Buenavista Municipal Mayor Atty. Dave Duallo, and the provincial and municipal DA and BFAR SAAD implementers at the Buenavista Municipal town hall. The meeting reaffirmed strong synergy between national and local agencies to continue the mission to uplift the lives of Boholano farmers and fisherfolk.

"SAAD has touched the lives of the farmers in the municipality. Social preparations have helped them in their farming activities. Happy ako na kasama ang municipality namin sa project site ng SAAD, ito ang project na down to grassroots ang na seserbisuhan. We provided them with interventions, and services", Municipal Agriculturist Lino Divinagracia shared during the meeting with Dir. Mula.

"SAAD made a good livelihood for the farmers. I am very happy. It has given a lot of benefits to the farmers," shared Buenavista Mayor Atty. Dave Duallo on the impacts of the program to the farmers of the covered areas.

Dr. Mula shared the vision of seeing multiple and integrated agricultural livelihood activities for

the marginalized farmers and fishers in one area as project convergence will not only expose the Boholanos to more streams of income, but also to many capacity enhancement and production support opportunities.

To address the high costs of fertilizers, the FPA intensifies local monitoring activities to educate the farmers on balanced fertilization strategies (BFS) for the interventions they receive. This monitoring also provides information regarding the market and economic position of the country that affects local fertilizer prices.

Aiding farmers and encouraging organic materials utilization for fertilization, the Program provided two units of corn dehusker to two farmers associations (FAs), Nakahugpong Mag-Uuma sa Cawag (40 members) and Puting Bato United SAAD Farmers Association (40 members) to help the corn farmers in the area to utilize residues of the corn. Dir. Mula calls for immediate provision of training on operations of the equipment they received. He also suggested that if farmers could sell corn seeds, it would be good if the municipality can buy or source these from the farmers.

The director visualizes crop farmers' integration of tilapia and other fisheries activities, and fisherfolks into gardening and other agricultural engagements, then food sufficiency in the community can be addressed.

The meeting was attended by Agriculture Program Coordinating Officer (APCO)- Bohol Aurea Madrio, BFAR Provincial Fishery Officer-in-Charge Candido Samijon, BFAR Bohol Planning Officer Analiza Casquejo, FPA Planning Officer IV Atty. Errol John Ramos, FPA7 Provincial Officers, DA-SAAD Provincial Focal, Provincial Coordinator, Area Coordinators, and SAAD RPMSO staff. This demonstrates inter-agency coordination committed to the OneDA approach to provide agricultural services to farmers and fishers in the province. ###



CAFSWISA: Thriving fish growers for fresh and processed tilapia enterprise

by Jennifer A. Valcobero

About CAFSWISA

The municipality of Cabanglasan belongs to the lowland areas in Bukidnon where the agricultural activity takes place on small farms that produce crops for subsistence and markets. While the area is arable than the highlands, growing staple food such as rice requires a flooded or irrigated land to keep water on the fields during tillage.

Through the Small Water Impounding Project (SWIP) implemented by the Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM) in the area, farmers can now cultivate rice through the irrigated farming system. The water-retaining structure constructed can hold up to 800,000-1,000,000 cubic meters of volume storage for rainfall and runoff waters.

Founded in 2018 with 20 members, the Cabanglasan Farmer's Small Water Irrigation System Association (CAFSWISA) grows rice on a total production area of 87 hectares near the earthen dam. This farming activity provided them a steady annual income of Php 50,000-80,000 from selling only three-fourths of their harvest and saving the remaining for consumption.

Since it took them five months to wait for the grain to harvest, the group decided to venture into tilapia farming as an additional source of income.

With the existing source of water, a farmer can establish a 500-square meter (sqm) fishpond for every hectare of the rice field as additional food and income by diversifying farm activities and increasing yields of both rice and fish crops.

In June 2018, the Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) Program through the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) 10 introduced the Tilapia in Freshwater Cage Project

to the farmers and fishers of Cabanglasan.

Determined to get involved in the project, CAFSWISA became a beneficiary of tilapia in cage farming. Before the implementation, the group members were equipped with Tilapia in Fish Cage Grow-out training and good practices to ensure project sustainability.

Project implementation and management

Chaired by Mr. Leonilo Arcadio, CAFSWISA installed their cages measuring 25 square meters and started their operation in July 2018. Inputs provided include 4 units of fish cages, fish landing shed, freezer, and tilapia culture in fish cage grow-out technology, amounting to Php 574,210. The tilapia fingerlings were supplied under the Technology Outreach Station (TOS) of the BFAR regular program.

Fingerlings were then simultaneously stocked. After five months culture period, members harvested the fish at a 60% survival rate.

According to Mr. Arcadio, the 50-60% fish survival rate is a problem because it indicates lapses in the production process. Provincial SAAD Focal Person Alfonsus Gonzaga suggested putting the tilapia fingerlings in a pond first. Once they grow bigger, the fish are recommended to be transferred to the cages to have an assured 80% survival rate.

For the next production cycle, the group prepared a one-meter depth pond with water not less than a three-fourths meter deep and stocked the fingerlings. The mixed-sex populations of stocks lead to uncontrolled reproduction when the fish reached its sexual maturity at three to five months.

Moreover, when the excessive recruitment of fingerlings happens, the parents and offspring compete for food and become stunted (may not reach the marketable size) due to overpopulation...*continue to p. 9*

DEVELOPMENT

Balanced Fertilization + Organic Pesticide cuts half...from p. 1

As prices of agricultural chemical inputs continue to skyrocket, Mr. Jaime delos Santos, Chairperson of Calawag Foliar Fertilizer Farmers Association (CFFFA), turned to partial organic farming and was able to cut 51.4% of input costs versus relying on purely chemical farm inputs.

(To learn more about the interventions and training received by CFF FA, read <https://saad.da.gov.ph/2021/11/ocmin-farmers-to-pursue-organic-foliar-fertilizer-production>).

The DA's response

The Department of Agriculture (DA) agencies, in tandem with State Universities and Colleges (SUCs), have started implementing the Balanced Fertilization Strategy (BFS) Program – a combination of organic and inorganic inputs use and other forms of strategy (i.e. cover cropping or green manuring, individual farmer soil fertility map, improve cropping systems, etc.) to attain the maximum potential of farmlands while maintaining soil fertility and structure.

The program also aims to address problems of land degradation and decline in soil fertility and to aid in the fertilizer price increase through adjustments in the cropping and management systems in farming.

Recently, DA through the Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority (FPA) coordinated with the Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) Program to introduce the implementation of the BFS last March 22-24 in the municipalities of Nabunturan, Monkayo, and Lanak, Davao de Oro to encourage the farmers to use farm wastes such as chicken manure and leguminous crops as fertilizers.

But even before the implementation of BFS, there are a handful of farmers who have already started to utilize organic inputs for their farms and are aware of its benefits. However, it is not practiced by the majority of Filipino farmers.

As traditional fertilizers continue to be far from being affordable, Mr. delos Santos saw an opportunity to try organic farming and see if it can be a solution to a cheaper farming cost.

Inorganic vis-a-vis Organic farming

One of the advantages of using inorganic inputs is having a higher yield compared to organic fertilizers. However, using chemical fertilizers has disadvantages in the long run as farmers notice land deterioration and depleted soil nutrients which require more fertilizer application every cropping, hence an increase in farming cost.

On the other hand, organic inputs improve the soil texture which leads to an increase in the bacterial and fungal activity in the soil, nourishing it. In addition, organic inputs are safe and not harmful to the environment.

Realizing balanced fertilization and organic pesticide use

After using purely chemical fertilizer for his rice crop inputs last planting season, the CFFFA chairperson decided to experiment on his 3,200 square meters (sqm) land during the dry season using a mix of inorganic and organic inputs produced by their association.

CFFFA received training in organic foliar fertilizer production in October 2021 courtesy of SAAD and the Municipal Agriculture Office (MAO) of Magsaysay. Mr. Delos Santos wanted to put his newly-acquired knowledge to the test.

For this new venture and strategy, Mr. delos Santos used one (1) sack of 14-14-14 or complete chemical fertilizer, two (2) 1.5 bottles of Fermented Plant Juice (FPJ) – an organic foliar fertilizer made from plant enzymes as a substitute for urea, and F1, an organic insecticide made from fermented banana stalks and fish amino acids produced by their association. This strategy is the judicious use of inorganic and organic fertilizer and pesticide and is called good agricultural practices (GAP).

For his soil preparation, he applied 14-14-14 – the only inorganic input he used as basal or the initial application of fertilizer for his rice crop (long pin variety). After two weeks, he started the weekly application of FPJ for three months.

Mr. delos Santos observed that using FPJ made the rice plants more resistant to heat and strong winds compared to crops that grow on chemical inputs. Seventy (70) days later, Jaime noticed insects hidden inside several stalks of rice plants. He applied F1 to get rid of the pests, but it still damaged some of his plants. Undaunted, he took the incident as a learning opportunity.

“Nung nakita ko na may mga insektong nakatago sa loob ng tangkay ng palay ko, naisip ko na dapat nga pala sinabay ko na agad yung F1 sa FPJ noong unang linggo ng pag-spray ko para naagapan agad ang pagdapo ng insekto,” he said.



(When I saw some insects hidden inside the rice stalk, I realized that I should have applied F1 earlier with the first application of FPJ to prevent insect infestation.)

Mr. delos Santos spent Php 3,100.00 for his first venture on his partial organic farming strategy.

Compared to his last production with the use of chemical inputs, Mr. delos Santos needed four kinds of chemical products (urea, 14-14-14, 16-20-0, and 21-0-0) to fertilize 6,000sqm rice field, plus insecticides which cost him Php 11,060.00.



GAP vs Inorganic farming

On May 22, 2022, Mr. delos Santos' 3,200sqm good agricultural practice (GAP) had an expenditure of Php 3,100.00 that yielded 26 cavans of rice. The ratio of per cavan expense is computed at Php 119.00.

Comparing his previous 6,000sqm rice production in June 2021, the productivity was 45 cavans with expenses totaling to Php 11,060.00. This is equivalent to Php 245.00 per cavan expenses.

Income

Evaluating both production cycles of 2021 and 2022, the income derived from purely inorganic farming is computed at Php 605.00/cavan while that of GAP is at Php 731.00/cavan. There was a difference in derived income of GAP technology at Php 126.00/cavan.

Price-wise, Mr. delos Santos proved that GAP farming is cheaper, saving him 51.4% of farm production cost per cavan.

Considering the learning curve that Mr. delos Reyes faced, he believes that with continued perseverance in pursuing organic farming, he will achieve better results.

"Maganda ang paggamit ng organic [fertilizer]. Malaking tipid talaga lalo na ang mahal ng pataba ngayon. Kapag nagamay ko lalo ang paggamit ng organic [fertilizer], mas lalaki na talaga ang ani at mas tataas na kita," said Mr. delos Santos.

(Using organic fertilizers is beneficial. It helps us save money, especially now that the prices of fertilizers keep on increasing. Once I master using organic fertilizers, the harvest will be more bountiful and income would increase).

Mr. delos Santos plans to continue using organic fertilizers in his fields produced by their association to promote their product and show its desirable results to his fellow farmers.

The MAO supports CFFFA in introducing its products through agri-trade fairs and social media promotion. In addition, the DA continues to promote the implementation of BF and organic pesticides or GAP through its partner agencies and stakeholders. ###



scan to see Mr. Delos Santos' total expenses in his second cropping practicing GAP

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scan to see Production income from tilapia in cage culture

CAFSWSA: Thriving fish growers...from p. 7

Moreover, commercial tilapia production generally requires the use of male monosex populations since they grow approximately twice as fast as females. Therefore, mixed-sex populations develop a large size disparity among harvested fish, which affects marketability (Towers, 2014).

To avoid this, after the fingerlings are nursed to an advanced size within two months, the group transferred them to the cage. While they are in breeding season at this time, their eggs will just fall through the bottom and will not develop if fertilized, thus disrupting the cycle.

Tilapia has a very small stomach and grows best when fed 2-3 times a day at 9 am and 5 pm, respectively. This is equivalent to 3% of their total body weight. When they enter the fastest-growing period (about 300 grams), the group feeds the fish five times daily. Also, they kept the fresh water oxygen level above three parts per million (ppm) to ensure a good appetite for fish to achieve rapid growth and be ready for market in five months.

Cages are also maintained by cleaning one or two times per month especially when organism like algae is present and by inspecting the cage regularly to make sure it is tightly covered with nets.

This whole process allowed the group

to achieve the target growth rate (marketable size) at 350-500 grams and an 80% survival rate.

Results

Each year, the group has one production cycle in which net income was saved up for the subsequent cycle expenses to sustain the project.

From 2018 to 2020, the group already stocked 30,000 tilapia fingerlings which provided them Php 222,900 gross income after selling 2,229 kilograms (kg) of tilapia grow-out valued at Php 100/kg.

According to Mr. Arcadio, marketing their fish has never been a problem. Several walk-ins and local buyers went to their area and directly bought the fish.

"Dako kaayu ni'g impact, mao nang dako kaayu ni'g pasalamat, dili lang ako, dili lang kami. Makatabang una ang iyahang income makadugang sa among association. Ang mga miyembro malipay gyud sila labi na ug naay harvest kay gawas nga barato, makakaon pagyud sila og presko nga tilapia. Maayo siya kay ang mga hugaw sa isda madala isip abuno sa among basakan," shared Mr. Arcadio referring to the impact of the SAAD project to them...

continue to next page



(It has a huge impact, that is why we are grateful, not just me, not just them. Our income helps the association. Members are delighted especially during harvest because they can buy the fish at a cheaper price and enjoy a tasty dish from fresh tilapia. Also, fish waste carried in the water flow serves as fertilizer for our irrigated rice fields).

He added that they prayed SAAD will not yet conclude this year because they are hoping to gain more knowledge on tilapia farming through a series of training provided by the program.

Association secretary Ms. Elvira Sakin also said that they are thankful for the SAAD project because they already had their rice supply and now they have immediate access to tilapia as their favorite viand.

“Ang plano sa asosasyon sa pagka-karon nga ampingan gyud na namung fishcage ug manalangin sab mi nga unta ma-extend pa ang support ninyo aron madugangan ang amung pondo. Amo pagyud nang e-tigum, ug dili pa gyud na magamit para sa project, pwede gihapon namu na igamit sa uban pang project kay daghan pa ang gastuhanan pero ang uban nga mga BOD dili nga musugot nga gamiton kay ang kwarta diha ra gyud na siya sa fish cage,” she answered pertaining to the group’s plan.

(Our plan as of now is to take care of our fish cages and we pray that SAAD support will be extended to help us save more. Our savings will just be intended for the operation and maintenance of our cages).

Proactive measures to avoid pilfering

Mr. Arcadio shared that they have taken preventive action to steer away outside fishers who steal fish in the cages. If the incident happens, there is an internal policy on paying the appropriate penalties from the first to the second offense.

To make it clear, they put up boundaries and assigned a member to watch the surroundings.

“Gibuhatan namo og boundary ang amuang fish cage. Gipalutaw namo diha ang mga plastic ug pisi nga nagpamatuod nga bawal mag-entry dinha. Dayon naa pod mi polisiya nga bawal mag-laya diri, bawal mag-bingwit. Kung kinsay makadapok tunga sa penalty ang iyaha, ang katunga sa barangay. Ang bantay pod namu dinhi, sa barangay na dreto mu-tawag, dili na sa association,” disclosed Mr. Arcadio.

(We created boundaries for our fish cage using a nylon fishing net with float line attached to small plastic floats to inform others that they cannot enter. Then, we also have a policy that hooked and cast net fishing are not allowed. Whoever is caught will be on first and second offense sanction directly reported to the barangay. The penalty fee imposed will be equally shared by the barangay and the one who caught the disobedient individuals).

Plans for enterprise development

Mr. Arcadio said that their income this year will be allocated for the development of the group’s tilapia nursery in the pond. This is to ensure ready stock of tilapia fingerlings for the next production cycle.

Also, they plan to engage in processing value-added products like lamayo (half-dried marinated tilapia) and tilanggit (dried tilapia) to achieve zero post-harvest loss. This is after they receive the training for tilanggit and lamayo making, coached by the Provincial SAAD Focal Person Alfonsus Gonzaga.

Such efforts will help them sustain the project and expand their production area for fish cages. ###

TASEGFICO: Sustainability story of seaweed and milkfish farming

by Jennifer A. Valcobero

About Lanao del Norte

The province is known as the “Land of Beauty and Bounty” because of its beautiful and rugged terrain, cascading waterfalls, springs, lakes, mountains, and vast plains that dot its tropical landscape.

The economic activity in the province is predominantly steered by agriculture and fishing. Major crops produced are palay, corn, coconut, banana, and cassava. While the fishery commodities are seaweeds, tilapia, bangus, crabs, shrimp, tiger prawn, siganid, mudfish, catfish, and carp cultured in brackish water fishponds, freshwater ponds, marine pens, and cages.

To make ends meet, residents in the province either benefit from the coastal areas or till lands to produce crops. People in Tangueguiron, one of the coastal



barangays in Tubod, love fishing, growing seaweed, and cultivating milkfish in marine water.

Seaweeds are used in the food industry for gelling, thickening, and stabilizing agents. Aside from its economic benefit, it also offers a slate of opportunities to mitigate and adapt to climate change such as damping wave energy and protecting shorelines,



elevating pH levels, and supplying oxygen to waters, thereby locally reducing the effects of ocean acidification and de-oxygenation.

The plant can also help prevent coastal eutrophication (caused by the increase of water nutrients due to runoff, use of fertilizers, and/or excessive organic load composition) by absorbing large quantities of nitrogen, phosphorus, and carbon dioxide thereby preventing algal blooms such as red tides that may affect and place heavy economic losses on coastal aquaculture (Duarte, 2017). Safe and sustainable, seaweed aquaculture is good for the economy and good for the ocean.

Tanguiguiron Seaweed Growers and Fishermen Cooperative (TASEGFICO)

TASEGFICO with 66 members received their certificate of registration from the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) on July 2, 2021, when they became part of the Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) Program, and recipients of the Seaweed and Milkfish in Pen Project from 2019 to 2021.

Prior to their selection as beneficiaries of the program, the members get their income from growing seaweed – engaged in a 100-line farm. However, they could not sustain the activity due to financial instability. During harvest, earnings were just enough to provide for the basic needs of their families, while the fishers remain in debt to provide for extra needs.

It was until the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic that the farmers and fishers heavily felt its impact while they keep their families fed through the global crisis. At the height of the crisis, the movement of goods and produce between countries, regions, provinces, and

municipalities was significantly restricted with some areas completely closed. This prevented the farmers and fishers from accessing the markets resulting in waste of produce, especially fruits and vegetables. The social distancing translated to reducing the farm laborers is notably a job loss to farm workers who rely mainly on daily wages for livelihood.

It can be recalled that to address the situation, the Department of Agriculture (DA) launched the Plant, Plant, Plant Program which aims to sustain farmers' and fishers' productivity and earning capacity.

The initiative is grounded on the provision of basic, practical, and quick-yielding agricultural and fishery interventions to help the marginalized sectors deal with the long-drawn pandemic.

Adhering to the DA's campaign for sustained and unhampered food production, BFAR 10 provided basic inputs for aquaculture which are deemed imperative to support the activities of the region.

Seaweed Farming

In 2019, TASEGFICO received Php 1,208,050 worth of Seaweed Project which included propagules and training on seaweed aquaculture.

The cooperative immediately cultivated the seaweed seedlings in each member's ¼ hectare (ha) area, using the floating long line method. The lines are tied at both ends of the posts parallel to each other and 20-25 centimeters (cm) from the bottom. Each site location has a water depth of 1 to 2 feet at low tide and at least 7 feet at high tide. This way, the seaweeds will not be overexposed to sunlight and air during low tide and will be exposed to enough sunlight during high tide.

The group performs regular farm visiting, keeps plants clean by removing mud and rough seaweeds, and checks and prunes the disease-infected portion of the plants. The group started to harvest from their plants after 45-60 days or before

the seaweed reaches 1kg, the farmers gather them by taking all the plants and replacing them with new cuttings. Dried seaweeds were sold at Php 50-60/kg, while the fresh ones were valued at Php 10-25/kg.

The whole year round, seaweed gardening provided the group with a consolidated income of Php 900,000.

Similarly, in 2020, supplemental support was granted consisting of farm implements for the seaweed project, including a noodle maker machine, and processing utensils. From the plants alone in this cycle, Php 540,000 was earned.

For 2021, the accumulated gross income was Php 264,000. In total, the cooperative already had Php 1,704,000 revenue from seaweed farming. .

For them to venture into an enterprise, they were taught how to make seaweed crackers and noodles. They are still on trial up to this day but shortly, they will display and market the said seaweed products.

Seaweed nursery

In 2021, the group needs to source out propagules outside the vicinity – of which transport to their farm site will affect the quality. This is a critical period for the seedlings because when they are taken off the water for 12 hours without pouring seawater in-between, they will die. Also, other factors that will

lead to mortality are when they are placed in a container with inadequate ventilation, packed with too much pressure, or if there is an increase in temperature inside.

To address the said concerns, SAAD provided them with a seaweed nursery worth Php 300,000. The construction of the establishment is still ongoing.

Cultivating bangus in pen project

In 2020, another project which is the Milkfish in Pen was introduced including materials for the pen, freezer, Fiberglass Reinforced Plastic (FRP) boat, and accessories, training on food processing such as bangus deboning, and other value-adding products amounting to Php 993,817.55.

Milkfish culture in brackish water is a traditional practice for most fishers, that is why the project is not new to the cooperative.

In a 600sqm fish pen, the group cultured the bangus fingerlings for four to five months. With proper management and regular monitoring of their fish, the cooperative accumulated Php 330,400 (two cropping) for its first-year operation.

In 2021, feeds and fingerlings were also provided by the program, as well as mini processing shed...*continue to next page*



about saadvocacy

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The SAADVocacy aims to inform the program's partners about its important happenings and events towards realizing its goal of contributing the poverty alleviation of the farmers and fisherfolks from 30 provinces and areas covered by the Executive Order No. 70.

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and training on value-adding products. Income from fresh bangus sold at Php 150/kg increased this time to Php 747,231 for two cropping.

As of December 2021, the cooperative earned Php 1,077,631 from selling fresh bangus in the local market.

"Duha na ang among fishpen karon, ang pinaka-una maoy gihatag gikan sa SAAD project. Ang among kita adtung gihatag gikan sa SAAD maoy gipagama namo sa ika-duhang fishpen. Sige mi g training, gitudluan na mi ug unsaon pagkuha sa bukog sa bangus," shared Mr. Feliciano del Socorro Jr., chairperson of TASEGFICO.

(We now have two fish pens, the first one was provided by SAAD. We used our income from the first pen to create another one. We are also provided with a series of training activities for bangus processing such as deboning.)

From their income, the members shared Php 2,000 each and the remaining amount will be used for the next cropping expenses. They will also take home fresh fish for their families.

"Nagpasalamat gyud ko, kay tungod ani nakapatukod mi g bag-ong fishpen, naka-palit mi og lote, nakahuman ko og processing shed. Kini tanan, wa man ko gadahom ani. Tungod lang gyud anang kwartaha sa permiro nga hinatag sa SAAD program og sa BFAR, nahitabo ni tanan," vouched Mr. Del Socorro Jr.

(We are thankful, because of SAAD we are able to make another fish pen, we also bought land for our mini processing shed. Of these, we didn't expect this much to happen. We got these because of SAAD's first assistance to us through BFAR.)

Results of members' concerted efforts

Met with different challenges during project implementation, the association turned into a cooperative through the SAAD program in July 2021.

In 2020, they were able to establish a small store where they display various agriculture supplies such as bamboo poles, nets, and other materials used for fishing. Reported income reached Php 44,000.

In 2021, they purchased a 25sqm land worth Php 35,000 for their mini-processing shed (Php 336,995) provided by the program.

Cooperative Treasurer, Ms. Esterlina Lantaca attested how the project helped them feed their families during the pandemic. *"Nagpasalamat ming tanang miyembro sa kooperatiba kay nakadawat mi sama aning mga gi-harvest namu ron, maka-income pami, maka-kaon pa gyud mi. Pasalamat pod mi nga gihatagan mi aning project kay aron naa mi ipatuyok sa among na-kwarta para among ihimu para sa among sunod nga project aron nga mulambo mi tanan miyembro."*

(All of us members of the cooperative are thankful because we have this project where we get income from, and eat fresh fish too. In fact, we used our income as rolling capital for our next plans for project sustainability).

"Magpasalamat gyud ko sa BFAR-SAAD nga gitabangan kaming mga mananagat. Ang akong gusto unta nga nanghinaot mi nga tabangan ming mga mananagat kay mao ragyuly panginabuhi namo. Pasalamat gyud ko sa inyuha kay gihatagan ninyo og paglaum ang mga mananagat," was Mr. Del Socorro's gratifying message to the program implementers.

(I am very grateful to BFAR-SAAD for helping us. Sailing the sea is our source of income. Thank you for giving the fishers hope)

Enterprising

The cooperative will sustain its bangus and seaweed production by increasing profit through processing technologies provided by the program such as noodle maker machine and mini-processing shed.

They observed that their seaweed and bangus products were loved and consumed by the local buyers. To cater to the growing demand, they will increase their production of deboned bangus and seaweed products such as crackers, noodles, and ice cream. They will also add more agriculture supplies in their small store for the farmers and fishers in their area.

TASEGFICO hopes to avail more of BFAR-SAAD training activities related to the projects provided to them. They believed that bangus and seaweeds pave the way for the rise of other value-added products – an opportunity that should not be missed out. This will promote sustainability of the fishery sector and of coastal areas, as well as provide more stable and secure fishery livelihoods. ###



scan to see
TASEGFICO
seaweed and
milkfish production
income