

SAAD *vocacy*

The official newsletter of the Special Area for Agricultural Development Program

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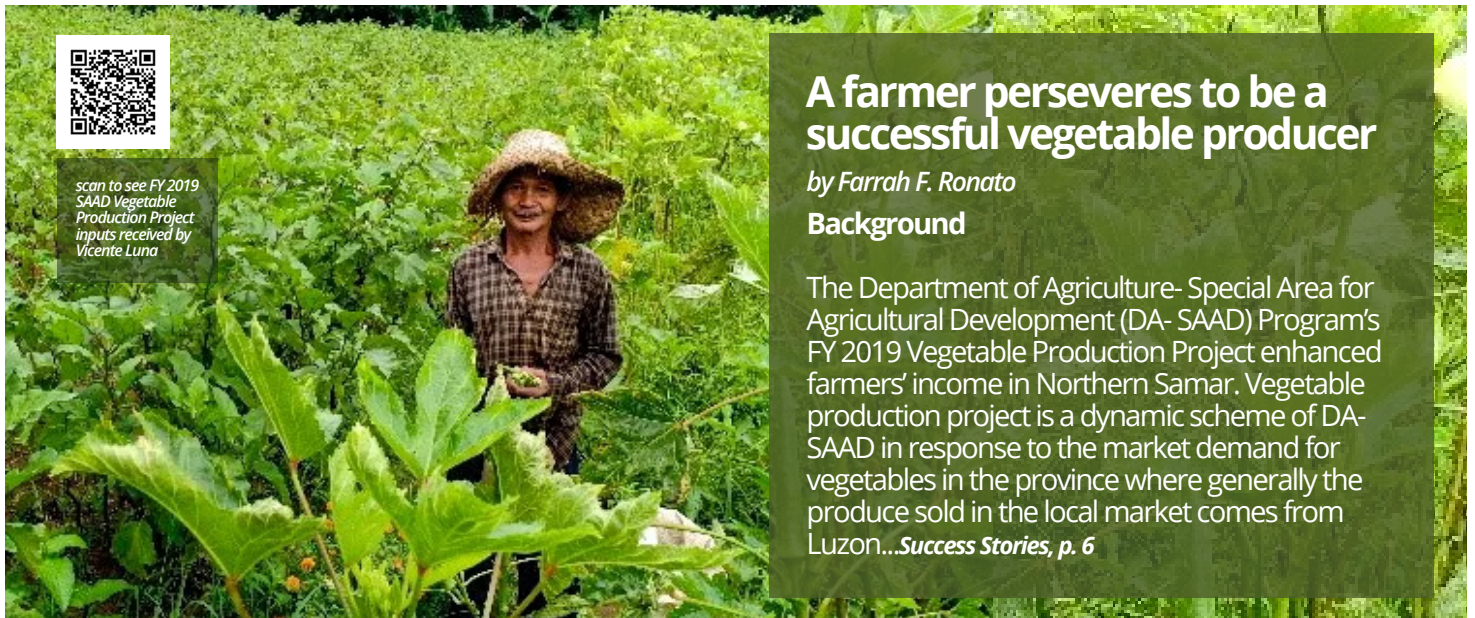
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scan to see FY 2019 SAAD Vegetable Production Project inputs received by Vicente Luna

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by Farrah F. Ronato

Background

The Department of Agriculture- Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA- SAAD) Program's FY 2019 Vegetable Production Project enhanced farmers' income in Northern Samar. Vegetable production project is a dynamic scheme of DA-SAAD in response to the market demand for vegetables in the province where generally the produce sold in the local market comes from Luzon...*Success Stories, p. 6*

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES



16 FAs receive Php 1.1M worth of livestock and poultry projects from DA-SAAD

by Jennifer A. Valcobero

COTABATO, July 11, 2022 – Various livestock interventions and poultry inputs worth Php 1.1 million were provided to 16 farmers' associations (FAs) in Cotabato by the Department of Agriculture – Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD) Program during the simultaneous distribution from June 30 to July 1.

Said projects were distributed with the goal of increasing farm productivity of the associations and expanding their sources of income...
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GIDA and ELCAC farmers received mallard ducks for balut prod'n in Davao de Oro

by James Brian R. Flaga



DAVAO DE ORO, July 19, 2022 – Strengthening balut production in the province, 200 members from 10 farmers' associations (FAs) across 10 municipalities of Davao de Oro received mallard ducks from the Department of Agriculture – Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD) as part of the program's 2022 livelihood projects.

Mallard duck raising was identified as a feasible livelihood project for Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas (GIDAs) and End Local Communist Armed Conflict (ELCAC) farmers because of its adaptability to changing weather conditions and quick turnover. SAAD sees the needs of communities living in GIDAs and conflict-stricken areas of ELCAC for food and income resources, as access to basic services are usually scarce in these areas...*continue to p. 4*

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES

Vegetable production livelihood awarded to SAAD expansion areas in OccMin

by Dianne Francis A. Sy

OCCIDENTAL MINDORO, July 27, 2022 – The Department of Agriculture – Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD) Program awarded Php 600,000.00 worth of vegetable production materials to six farmers' associations (FAs) to boost vegetable production in SAAD expansion areas in Calintaan and Sablayan.

With this livelihood project from SAAD, 225 farmers will benefit and start their cultivation of pakbet or assorted vegetable seeds and garden tools.

Each FA in Calintaan will cultivate .5 ha of land for their communal garden. Members of the associations agreed to lend their lands for their groups to use.

On the other hand, vegetable growers in Sablayan will start in individual backyard gardening while working on obtaining land for their communal garden.

"Nagpapasalamat kami sa SAAD dahil kayo pa lang ang nakapagbigay sa amin ng mga tulong" (We are grateful to SAAD because they are the first who gave us support), shared Ms. Arlen Sablayan, chairperson of SAKAMAMA.

The beneficiaries reside in far-fetch areas, estimating a minimum of 30-minute motorcycle ride from the main proper. Their homes are also situated in End Local Communist Armed Conflict (ELCAC)-identified areas in Calintaan and Sablayan.

SAAD Program makes sure to reach out to the marginalized communities and expands this reach in Occidental Mindoro, both for IPs and Tagalog farmers by providing free livelihood interventions suited to their community needs despite program conclusion this year. ###



Mushroom industry boost for NegOcc thru Php 1.7M-worth SAAD support

by CJ Gamarcha

NEGROS OCCIDENTAL, July 29, 2022 – The Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) Program awarded mushroom production projects worth Php 1.7 million to six farmers' associations (FAs) in Negros Occidental as part of the Department of Agriculture's (DA) efforts to improve food security and economic growth in rural areas.

Six organizations are involved in the project – five from the Salvador Benedicto municipality and one from the municipality of Calatrava.

These FAs with 190 first-line beneficiaries partaking in the mushroom cultivation venture relatively depend on planting backyard vegetables such as eggplant, tomato, okra and squash, among others as their main source of living. Their harvested crops are often used for home consumption, sometimes traded to the public market. In Salvador Benedicto, upland farmers also grow pineapple and root crops which best thrive under the town's fertile soils and cool weather.

Mushroom Industry in Negros Occidental

Mushroom farming gradually hypes over the years as more people appreciate the nutritious fungus with its high content of vital micro-nutrients and protein. Used for gastronomy and other medicinal properties, mushrooms are usually regarded as a delicacy, not just in the Philippines but in other Asian countries as well. There are 10 varieties of edible and medicinal mushrooms grown in the country such as paddy straw, oyster, shiitake, button, ear fungi, milky, yellowish oyster, reishi, lion's mane, and king tuber oyster.

According to the Office of the Provincial Agriculturist (OPA) – Negros Occidental, mushroom is one of the complementing commodities of the province under its organic agriculture program. Mushroom waste substrate can be converted into valuable material by vermicomposting which farmers can utilize as organic fertilizer for their vegetable production projects from OPA.

Mr. Alex Lecciones, Provincial Agriculturist II of OPA, said they are assisting local growers by providing them demonstration and distribution services through the provincial government-run mushroom laboratory at the Panaad Park and Stadium in Barangay Mansilingan, Bacolod City. As part of their assistance, growers receive materials for mushroom cultivation for a startup production as well as training on mushroom production and processing.

Aside from individual and group growers, the mushroom laboratory also caters to groups of mushroom growers, covering about 7,500 square meters of backyard-type plantations in the cities of Bacolod and Himamaylan and the municipalities of Hinigaran and Murcia.

In terms of volume, commercial growers currently produce an average of 360 to kilograms of Oyster mushrooms weekly, OPA records showed.

Mr. Lecciones pointed out that growing mushrooms involves thorough procedures, thus, the province provides monthly training among local growers. Aside from demonstration, the mushroom laboratory also supplies them planting materials at cheaper prices – Php 100-150 for planting and mother spawn, respectively.

Mr. Lecciones said the province is utilizing the sales generated to fund the training and purchase of revolving materials, mainly mushroom spawns.

"There is currently a potential market for mushrooms," Mr. Lecciones said in an interview with Bacolod Sunstar. He added that the province is still in deficit in terms of supply which local growers may take as an opportunity to increase their production.

With the constant demand for mushroom produce in the entire Negros, SAAD farmers proposed mushroom cultivation to be their livelihood projects this year which was eventually approved seeing this will expand food production and commodities from rice to other crops.

The local government units and the Municipal Agriculture Office were also supportive of the said high-yielding venture for its area suitability and additional source of income for the beneficiaries' basic needs.

Salvador Benedicto

Salvador Benedicto has fertile grounds ideal for farming so most, if not all, upland farmers from the said associations cultivate rice, cucumber, tomato, ginger, pineapple, eggplant, among others. However, most barangays have poor access to farm-to-market roads so farmers struggle in terms of marketing their products to the nearby communities. Five FAs in the municipality were selected to be the recipients of SAAD FY 2022 Mushroom Production Projects worth Php 1,613,750. Delivered last June 29, the initial inputs included rice bran, crack corn, molasses, agricultural lime, sawdust, digital weighing scale, plastic crates, plastic drums, steel drums, rice grain net, spade, water hose, and wheelbarrow. The remaining components of the intervention set to be delivered this August are fruiting bag molders and materials for housing of mushroom production.

Benefitting the project are 30 members each from FABI, PIBFA, TBBBFA, BISFFA, and KISFFA with a total consolidated production area of 0.5-hectare.

Unlike the FA in Calatrava who already received mushroom fruiting bags, these groups instead acquired raw materials since they are aiming to produce mushroom fruiting bags to supply growers not just in their municipality but also for neighboring areas.

Said FAs will be having their training in mid-August once all of the inputs are delivered completely. While waiting for their schedule, beneficiaries received information, education and communication (IEC) materials produced by the Regional Agriculture and Fisheries Information Section (RAFIS) that supplemented their ideas on the

methods of growing mushrooms. To note, provincial implementers postponed the onsite training set in early June due to inclement weather. Topics include life cycle of mushrooms, mushroom composting, production of mushroom fruiting bags, factors in mushroom cultivation, preparation to start mushroom farms, and handling and storage of pure culture mushrooms.

Calatrava

On June 29, the Kilusang Pagbabago Mina-utok Upland Farmers' Association (KPMUFA) initially received 2,000 pieces of mushroom fruiting bags worth Php 176,000 for their communal area (32 square meters). The group opted for mushroom cultivation as supplemental livelihood to their existing banana production since parts of waste materials from a banana tree such as rolled bases of banana leaves, dried stalk, and trunk can be used as a bulk material that mycelium or rootlike structure of fungi can use for energy and nutrition in edible mushroom cultivation. Using waste materials from banana trees would greatly reduce production cost for their mushroom cultivation.

The remaining project inputs which include materials for value-adding such as plastic crates, galvanized steel, storage rack, polypropylene plastic, denatured alcohol, isopropyl alcohol, spatula, mixing bowl, polyvinyl chloride (pvc) pipes, and steel drums are set to be delivered within third quarter of this year.

While acknowledging that it was their first-time cultivating mushrooms, Mrs. Susana Onop, vice-chairperson of KPMUFA said they still pursued this venture to help their association gain sustainable income from the sales of the nutritious fungus as well as produce value-added products out of their harvest.

Demand for meat alternatives is also growing with people becoming more conscious and cautious about their diet, thus, mushroom, which is high in protein and has no fats, is also a good alternative. One could earn more through mushroom processing like producing mushroom chicharon (crisp), chili paste, tocino, jam, candy, instant soup mix, among others. ####



16 FAs receive Php 1.1M worth of livestock and poultry...from p. 1

The draft animals (cattle, carabao, and horse) under the FY 2021 Dispersal Projects will be utilized for land preparation and cultivation, transportation, and hauling of products from farm to market of the 14 FAs from 11 municipalities. Farmers provided with livestock animals are usually corn, rice, and vegetable producers. With their community situated in isolated or far-flung areas, their harvests need to be transported, another burden for small-scale mixed-crop farmers.

Meanwhile, the upgraded goats, 10 to 12 months old, awarded to the first-in-line beneficiaries of Sta. Filomina and Leboce FAs in Makilala will be raised for milk and meat production. The municipality has plenty of grazing areas suitable for goat raising.

Prior to the delivery, the large and small ruminants were inspected and tested with Brucella and Surra, Caprine Arthritis Encephalitis (CAE), and vaccinated against hemorrhagic septicemia. Under the dispersal projects, biologics for the prevention and treatment of infectious diseases in animals were initially provided to some FAs while waiting for the additional stocks currently under procurement.

For the poultry component, Muscovy ducks were granted to the 10 members of Sikitan Women's Association. Each member will raise five ducks in their respective areas for egg and meat production. Before this project, the farmers' households are earning around Php 8,000 as land tenants and agricultural laborers.

The FAs (880 members) who accepted the livestock and poultry projects came from the municipalities of Aleosan, Arakan, Banisilan, Carmen, Kabacan, Kidapawan, Libungan, Makilala, Matalam, Pigcawayan, President Roxas, and Tulunan.

NAGMATA FA president, Mr. Rodney Sumagaysay shared that, "Ang SAAD maoy isa sa instrumentong gihimo sa Ginoo nga maoy nakatabang ug dako sa amuang panginabuhì, kun asa, kini nakatabang sa pagpalambo sa kahimtang sa amuang panginabuhì. Daghang salamat sa mga personahe nga nangulo aning SAAD program."

(SAAD became one of God's instruments to help us improve our livelihood. Thank you so much to the program implementers and management of the SAAD program).

The said distribution was facilitated by the Cotabato Agricultural Program Coordinating Officer Rey Domingo, Deputy SAAD Focal Person Elma Delante, SAAD regional and provincial staff, and representatives from the 13 local government units (LGUs) of Cotabato. ####





GIDA and ELCAC farmers received mallard ducks for balut prod'n...from p. 1

Each FA received 300 birds, 260 of which are ready-to-lay (RTL) duck hens, the remaining, drakes. Alongside the poultry, the program supplemented the FAs with 55 sacks of feeds (layer pellets in 2 tranches), various biologics (multivitamins, dewormer, antibiotics), 30 pieces of waterer, 150 pieces of egg trays (both to be delivered by the end of August), and incubator with hatcher at the end of the third quarter. In its entirety, the project cost Php 3,095,460.

Addressing Rizal Tribal Farmers Association, an indigenous people (IP)-centric FA assisted by the local Revitalized Pulis sa Barangay in Monkayo, SAAD Regional Focal Naomi C. Lamata said, *"Tumong ug tinguha sa SAAD tung una pa nga madugangan ang panginabuhian sa mga mag-uuma sa hilagayong dapit. Ang naka-special ani, Davao de Oro ra sa entero Davao Region naay SAAD. Ang isa pa, ginahatod sa inyohang lugar, dili kamo muadto sa munisipyo."*

(SAAD has always been about supplementing our farmers' income streams in hinterland areas. What's special about this is that in the entire Davao Region, only the province of Davao de Oro has SAAD. We deliver in your areas; you are not required to come to the municipality's center).

In conjunction with the mallard duck production project, all 10 FAs will also receive Open-Pollinated Variety (OPV) corn seeds as complement crop-

based intervention to the poultry.

"Sa part sa amoang asosasyon, bulahan kaayo mi kay naa sa amoa padulong ang mga proyekto. Mapasalamatan kami kay nahatagan jud ug na-train mi para ani. Andam mi nga palungtaron jud ni," Jumie Cuevas, Chairperson for Rizal Tribal Farmers Association, said.

(We are fortunate because these projects are coming to us. Thankful that we were trained and given these, and we are prepared to sustain this).

Prior to distribution, SAAD capacitated all identified FAs with basic livestock, poultry, and various crop management practices to ensure the projects' sustainability. The training also equipped farmers with practical and technical know-how specific to the projects.

Distribution

Newly-elected mayors of Monkayo and Maragusan, Emmanuel "Way Kurat" Zamora and Lito Cabalquinto, respectively, attended the distributions to their concerned FAs.

"Ang pag-uma mao ang atoang naandan. Ang paguma, diha ko nakabangon tung una. Isa ka lata sa kalabasa, ako nagugmad, ako nagtanom, akoy atiman. Importante ni sa atoa, ug kita nalipay nga ang ilang gi-saad ila ra dyud gihatag." Cabalquinto enthused.

(Farming is what we are used to here. It's what saved me. One can of squash (seeds), I tilled, I planted, and I cared for (it). This is important to us, and we are glad that what they promised, they delivered).

Tandik Multipurpose Cooperative, a local FA serving the isolated community of Tandik in Maragusan, is one of seven identified FAs slated to receive SAAD's 2022 interventions. Tandik, more than

an hour and a half away from the municipality proper, has an estimated elevation above sea level of 916 meters.

Chairperson Jupiter Comania, accepting the interventions, said, *"Amoa jud ni gihimoan ug polisiya, kay para mulungtad. Naay obligasyon kami nga mga mudawat para kung mubalik ang SAAD, naa tay mapakita."*

(We made a policy for this for it be sustainable. The farmers have an obligation so that when SAAD comes back, we have something to show).

The FA's policy is basically a roadmap for all members to have their share of mallard ducks in six months' time. The first step is a communal pen set up by the river, with plans to simultaneously sell and hatch eggs for income and distribution.

For Rizal Tribal Farmers Association, one of the recipient associations, their income from collected eggs will all be going into the association's finances. Consisting of all Manobo IPs, the local R-PSB was pivotal in the organization and registration of the FA. With the armed forces' help, the members agreed to forego initial labor fees for rearing the birds.

"Ang pagbahog sa asosasyon lang sa kay para way mugawas nga gasto. Kung kaya na, diha na mi manguha ug tigbantay," Cuevas added.

(The feeding will be done by association members to prevent extra expenses. When we are able, that's the time we'll get labor).

Amid the avian flu outbreak, the program was able to deliver and distribute the birds as the project's supplier is local. As per the agency's memo, the movement of birds within a region is allowed. ###

TOWARDS CBES

130 Apayao farmers, found success in DA's poultry prod'n project

by Kathleen Faye B. Agonoy

APAYAO, July 19, 2022 – One hundred thirty (130) poultry farmers of the Barocboc, Imelda, San Mariano, Sipa (BISS) Farmers Association (FA) earned initial Php 607,005 income from the Free-Range Chicken Egg Production Project granted by the Department of Agriculture – Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD) Program under FY 2021.

Organized in June 2017, the members are mostly rice farmers, poultry raisers, while some are into small-scale vegetable farming. These livelihoods allowed them to send their children to school and provide food on their table just enough for their needs.

BISS FA members underwent technical training on Egg Production with Health Management, bookkeeping, and marketing in 2021 facilitated by the program implementers. Said training sessions prepared the FA from receiving the livelihood package under the Free-Range Chicken Egg Production Project.

Implementation and Results

The project worth Php 1,279,990 included 5,760 head of free-range chicken, consisting of 5,120 head of female chicken, and 640 head of male chicken. The intervention was supplemented with poultry supplies consisting of 520 bags of layer mash, 130 sachet of vitamins, 120 rolls of poultry net, 180 pieces of poultry drinker, 1,200 pieces of plastic egg tray, and 240 pieces of plastic crates.

For a more focused effort in rearing the stocks, members are required to raise them in a backyard that has an area of at least 25 square meters.

With the free inputs, the project paved a way for poultry farming business venture. Norelyn Z. Vallejo, Vice President of BISS said that the pouring of time, effort, and dedication to the project can be financially rewarding.

During the first three months of the project operation, members attested that they experienced challenges as some stocks were not productive in egg-laying which resulted in low profit, and slow income return. Roldan Orteza, Community Development Officer, explained the stocks were stressed during the long drive of deliveries in transit to the province, which directly affected the stocks' performance.

In response, the group prioritized building their poultry houses to care for the chicken in a stress-free environment.

After months of nursing, they were able to collect a gross income of Php 607,005 (Table 1) from egg trading within the municipality.

On average, the group earns a weekly income of Php 21,000 and harvests at least 20 trays a day, with the eggs sold at P150 per tray sold at their neighborhood.

From June 16 to 17, the group also managed to sell their egg produced during the two-day celebration of the founding anniversary of the Municipality of Sta. Marcela earning an additional income worth Php 1,900, which facilitated by FCA officers.

Ofelia Ignacio, a member of BISS, recognized the livelihood project as a big help for both the members and consumers.

"Thank you SAAD ta nagsyaatan na dagituy a manok ta nangted da iti nagserbi kadakami nga maysa pamilya, mapa-income man wenu pang sidaen" (Thank you SAAD program because of these poultry stocks that were provided to us, we were able to gain benefit as family, either in terms of additional income or food consumption), expressed Ofelia.

Enterprise development comes with a policy

To make their production more efficient, the group agreed to provide one (1) tray of eggs each month during the laying period of the stocks as their counterpart to the association. While doing this, association officers have the responsibility to collect and market the eggs.

Ways forward

During the monitoring period, the members said that they are planning to purchase at least three (3) units of incubator to produce additional poultry stock. ###



Patience is a virtue: Hog raiser earns 149K

by Pauline Trixia D. Borja, Juan Paulo A. Quizana,



SORSOGON, July 15, 2022 –

Swine project beneficiary of the Department of Agriculture – Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD) Program from Brgy. Peñafrancia, Sta Magdalena, Sorsogon listed Php149,500.00 in 2 years of production, despite threats to the local hog industry.

In August 2019, Ms. Jennifer Gadais, a 36-year-old mother of three, was one of the chosen individual beneficiaries of the SAAD Swine Production Project FY 2019. Prior to the distribution, selected beneficiaries underwent training on Swine Production and Natural Farming Technologies in July 2019. Ms. Gadais' earnings from her poultry business would accumulate to Php 149,500.

The implementation of the project in the area is best suited for the chosen beneficiaries since many of them are already experienced in swine production. Additionally, Sta. Magdalena is a far-flung municipality, thus having swine production within their town contributes to the community's ease of access to meat

supply.

Before receiving the assistance, Ms. Gadais and her partner, Mr. Paquito Lacra primarily relied on their mealy salary as a Barangay Kagawad earning Php 6,000 per month, while Mr. Lacra, is a Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) volunteer earning a daily wage of Php 200. The couple uses this to supplement their family's daily expenses.

In August 2019, Ms. Gadais received inputs amounting to Php 33,400 which included five (5) head of native piglets (a boar and four gilts), one (1) pig pen, and 7.5 bags of rice bran feeds under SAAD's Swine Production Project FY 2019.

However, in the same month, African Swine Fever (ASF) cases were rising and reached nearby municipalities. Committed to sustainability, an agreement for a roll-over scheme was implemented where Ms. Gadais had to pass down the three gilts (eight months old) and the boar (nine months old) to the second-in-line...continue to p. 0000

SUCCESS STORY



A farmer perseveres to be a successful vegetable producer...from page 1

Vicente Luna, or Tatay Vicente as he is fondly called is a 63-year-old farmer from Brgy. Cababtoan, Pambujan, Northern Samar. Tatay Vicente has long been a rice farmer who also grows vegetables which are the main ingredients of pakbet dish, in addition to other crops in his farm. Being a seasoned farmer led him to be an entrepreneur who sells his produce from farm to market.

He was identified and endorsed by the Municipal Agriculture's Office to be a recipient of a SAAD project. On June 2019, Tatay Vicente together with 39 other individual beneficiaries in the province each received a livelihood assistance package that includes five types of vegetables seeds, fertilizers and training on vegetable production worth Php 7,049.80 with a total allocation of Php 281,992 in the municipality of Pambujan, Northern Samar.

Aside from the interventions, the beneficiaries acquired skills and knowledge through specialized training on land preparation, planting, harvesting, packaging, and marketing facilitated by SAAD Region 8 in 2021.

Tatay Vicente's vegetable production

Tatay Vicente's routine starts early at dawn with a cup of coffee and a root crop. As the sun rises, he and his helper till the soil, weed, pulverize the plots, water the plants, harvest the vegetables, and pack the produce, ready for wholesale trade by noon and retail in the afternoon. His day usually ends at sunset where he rests after a whole day's work.

Tatay Vicente and his wife raised eight children through his hard work in farming. Three of his kids are already professionals – a civil engineer, a licensed teacher, and a policeman. His second youngest is still pursuing a degree in civil engineering, while his youngest is currently in grade 12, and their eldest son assists in their farming activities. On the other hand, their twins died at an early age.

When asked about his income, he candidly said he can do mental math to account for his sales from his products.

"Sa tiempo san pandemic, naka-baligya ak sin maabot 11,709 kilos nga mga utanon nga umabot sin 1,700 ka kilo nga karabasa, 5,350 ka kilo ng rudyas, 3,614 ka kilo nga taron, 1,045 ka kilo nga okra, an akon la ugaring ampalaya kay gin atake san peste san bag o pala nga natubo," he shared.

(From January to July 2020 during the pandemic, I sold 11,709 kilograms [kg] of pakbet vegetables, 1,700kg squash, 5,350kg string beans, 1,045kg okra, and 3,614kg eggplant. But the ampalaya plant was infected with pests during the early vegetative stage).

Though Tatay Vicente received the intervention during the last half of 2019, his production of pinakbet vegetables only started in January 2020 due to time constraints.

Tatay Vicente's yearly routine includes planting vegetables from January to August, and rice from September to December. He shared that he

considers farming as a far better livelihood, "Mas maupay gud an pag-uma kay kun mayaon ka na ani, pakabaligya mo kwarta dayon" (Once a farmer has a harvest, money comes in right away), he shared.

He is grateful to the DA-SAAD Program for the skills training he attended before the inputs were distributed, which enhanced his farming skills and abilities especially on farm management, problem-solving and interpersonal skills. He is also thankful for the quality seeds and fertilizers provided by the program.

On a conversation with Tatay Vicente about his farm produce and sales, he shared, "An bulig sa ako san SAAD nga programa, sugad san abono, liso, ngan training kaparte san pagtanom san utanon, dako an pakabulig san ak pag-uma, ngan naka pauswag diri la saak pakabuhian, naka undong pa ini san ak pagkataro kay natutugunan an panginahanglan san ak pamilya."

(The support that the SAAD Program provided to me, such as fertilizers, seeds, and training were substantial factors that contributed to my success as a farmer, but more importantly, it restored my self-dignity and sustains the needs of my family).

To date, Tatay Vicente continues to engage in sequential cropping of vegetables and rice on his almost two-hectare farmland and currently raises 48 native chickens at his backyard and promised to stick to working close to nature. ###



DA-SAAD ensures capital formation to Cotabato hybrid corn growers

by Jennifer A. Valcobero

About Masagana Farmer's Association

The Masagana Farmer's Association (MFA), established in March 2022, is composed of corn farmers (20) in barangay Barangiran, Alamada, Cotabato. They mostly rely on hybrid corn cultivation as their source of income, each with one-hectare production area.

To sustain their livelihood, they borrow funds to...continue to next page

purchase production inputs from local cooperatives and traders with an agreed interest of up to 10%. In this system, the farmer usually is left with money just enough to make ends meet, while they remain in debt to provide for extra needs.

Prior to their inclusion in the Department of Agriculture – Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD) Program, these corn farmers organized as one association and was endorsed by their local government unit (LGU) to receive the program’s Hybrid Corn with Vegetable Production and Postharvest Support Project worth Php 649,999.60.

Project implementation

Project inputs provided to the group include 40 bags of hybrid corn seeds (good for one cropping) corn sheller, and corn mill, simultaneously distributed in March, June, and July.

The MFA members promptly planted the maize seeds upon receipt, and after nearly four months, in July 2022, the group harvested the crop listing 1,036 sacks of corn cobs – equivalent to 88,401 kilograms (kg). Corn cobs are valued in the market at Php 21-22/kg. With this, they earned a gross income of Php 2,146,654.50, where each member received Php 107,000.

After deducting their expenses from operations and maintenance, these individuals had an average take-home of Php 47,300.

With the current status of their production, the group members no longer rely on borrowing money to pay for their purchases of fertilizer and seeds. They also managed

to set aside 20% of their yield for food consumption.

Tatay Leopoldo Empleo, MFA president, shared how the project financially helped his family.

“Malipayon kayo mi tanang miyembro sa asosasyon, tungod sa kadako sa blessing sa Ginoo nga iyahang gihatag sa amoa pinaagi sa SAAD. Tungod sa hinabang gikan sa SAAD, kami nga mga miyembro sa asosasyon naka-angkon og ingon ani kadako nga kita. Unta daghan pa mo matabangan nga mga mang-uuma nga naglisod sa kinabuhì, pareha namo,” said Tatay Empleo.

(All of us members of the association are very happy because of this big blessing from God through SAAD. Because of the assistance from SAAD, we were able to earn a high income. We hope that you will assist more struggling farmers like us).

Sustainability effort

For sustainability, each member is required to return Php 1,000 to the group for each cropping cycle. The money shall go to their savings to pay for the establishment of a machinery shed and to purchase maize seeds and fertilizer for the next cropping. ###



DEVELOPMENT

NegOr implementers undergo TOT on Organizational strengthening and Agro-enterprise development

by *Jolina T. Daño*

NEGROS ORIENTAL, July 25, 2022 – The field implementers from the Department of Agriculture – Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD) Program in Negros Oriental underwent a six-day training of trainers on organizational strengthening and agro-enterprise development as a localized intensive effort to provide extension services to far-flung area farmers.

Eleven SAAD field enablers, consisting of the provincial coordinator (1), area coordinators (8), admin staff (1), and IT (1), participated in the training, which tackled facilitative leadership, decision-making and problem-solving techniques, production and operation management, basic financial literacy, record keeping, and financial management from June 1 to 3, 2022 and June 8 to 10, 2022 in Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental.

SAAD implementers are set to reecho, or conduct localized training to 420 farmers from 21 SAAD farmers’ associations (FAs) in Negros Oriental. The training aims to equip field implementers to effectively transfer the knowledge, skills and other perspectives to farmer-beneficiaries.

“Dako ug tabang ang training labi na sa pagtudlo sa farmer sa paghandle sa money. Aside pa ana, maka set na sila ug goal as to unsa ilahang gusto nga income pinaagi ani nga training. Na refresh pod ang among leadership skills labi na nga mo connect mi sa farmers sa field,” SAAD provincial coordinator Jehson T. Campos shared.



(The training would be beneficial to us in imparting what we have learned to the farmers, especially in handling their finances. Aside from that, this training could help them set goals for their desired income. The organizational training refreshed our leadership skills and would be beneficial to us when we connect with the farmers on the ground).

The field enablers will act as resource speakers from June 13, 2022 to September 8, 2022 to disseminate the information they have learned from the said training to the 420 farmers in the province.

Organizational Strengthening Since organizational

strengthening is essential in terms of keeping a close coordination with the beneficiaries, partners, and authorities involved, the relationships within associations are also given importance.

Mary Ronville M. Aba, Organic Agriculture and High Value Crops Development Provincial Focal Person and resource person on facilitative leadership, reminded the field implementers to celebrate small achievements and acknowledge the farmers’ success, for it will drive them to pursue what they love to do.

Meanwhile, Negros Oriental Provincial Coordinator, Jehson T. Campos perceived organizational strengthening as essential to each member for proper task delegation and constant monitoring of the projects. *“Importante gid nga lig-on ang asosasyon para magmalapuson ug*

mo lambo ang programa (Organizational strengthening is important in every organization for the program to prosper and succeed,”) PC Campos expressed.

Agro-enterprise development cannot be pursued if the organization is not organized.

Agro-enterprise Development

Farmers tend to focus more on production while disregarding the benefits of starting or joining a business enterprise. However, with sufficient knowledge on establishing a business, there would be more chances to increase profit opportunities for the farmers. Through the agro-enterprise development training, business-related skills such as how to improve negotiations, cost-benefit analysis, and the likes were conducted.

Through DA-SAAD’s continuous efforts to provide support to the FAs, projects implemented are aimed at giving more opportunities for the farmers to establish their own enterprise. For this to be successful, SAAD recognizes the need of the farmers to be equipped with sound and relevant farming knowledge, practice, technologies, and attitude.

DTI Negosyo Center Provincial Coordinator Michael Kristoffer Doyongan, Agricultural Technologist Miss Fe Pilosopo from the Office of the Provincial Agriculturist in Negros Oriental, Organic Agriculture and High Value Crops Development Provincial Focal Person ...*continue to p. 9*



Agricultural transformation in rice production: Apayao FA a service provider

by Kathleen Faye B. Agonoy

APAYAO, July 22, 2022 - Thirty-seven (37) farmers belonging to the Isnag indigenous community in Kabugao, Apayao earn from providing machine service through the mechanization initiatives of the Department of Agriculture- Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD) Program.

Established with the help of the DA-SAAD and the Local Government Unit (LGU), the farmers were organized as the Lutucuan Farmers Association (LFA) whose primary goal is to increase food production in their community through adaptation of efficient farming tools and practices.

The LFA was registered under the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) in June 2017 and is composed of indigenous rural workers, specifically for the underemployed and home-based workers with identified capabilities to engage in entrepreneurial activities. With this, the group was granted one (1) unit of four-wheel drive tractor under the Rice Production Project implemented in 2018 worth Php 1.2 million (FY 2016).

This helped the group to accumulate a revenue worth Php 329,633.00 as service provider and provided the community with sufficient rice from 2018 to 2021.

As service providers

As service providers LFA treasurer Marcela Tomat, 57, shared that the tractor supports major farm operations such as ploughing, harrowing, sowing, harvesting, transporting, and making land preparation easier both for corn and rice production areas.

Before the intervention of DA-SAAD, Ms. Tomat recalled how agricultural technological advances primarily developed their farm operation from manual labor.

"Dati kamin nga service provider. Iti kaibahan lang ket manual nu kasta makitalon kami. Ngem idi manipud naikkan kami iti four-wheel drive, kasta meten nga imalisto iti operation mi manipud iti land preparation gana pinagga-gapas" (We have always been a service provider. The only difference is that whenever we

do farm operations back then – we do it manually. But when the program provided a 4-wheel drive tractor to us, our farm operations have given us comfort and efficiency – from land preparation to harvesting period), said Ms. Tomat.

Rice and corn cultivation have two seasons (wet and dry) when farmers perform services from cultivation to harvesting activities. During the wet seasons, clients are paying at least Php 2,000 per hectare (ha) served. With this, the group earned Php 220,787.00 for the combined total of 110.39ha of rice area served in 2018 until 2021. The same amount is charged per hectare during the dry season listing Php 108,846.00 income for 54.42ha of rice area harvested in 2018 until 2021. With this, the group has total revenue of Php 329, 633.00.

Lorenzo Bareng, 68 years old, auditor of the group expressed that the adaptation of technology gave ease and improved farming activities compared to the manual methods. Modernizing farming methods saved farm laborers' time and effort, which translated to a more competitive means of production.

From 2018 to 2021, the total expense for the maintenance of the machinery reached Php 181,298.18 (Table 2). It includes fuel, oil filter, oil change, and replacement of destroyed machine parts. The group also paid Php 98,889.00 for the labor cost and has a total savings worth Php 49,444.95.

To date, regular inspection and maintenance are done every cropping season to prevent further damages.

The accumulated revenue per cropping season was apportioned into three: 55% for machine maintenance and labor costs, 30% for members' incentives, and 15% for the association's savings.

The role of mechanization in agricultural sustainability

By increasing harvest outputs, Mr. Bareng explained that before receiving the intervention, all they could think about was how to earn money for their daily expenses. But when they started to operate as service providers, they gradually learned how to listen and assist the needs of their community in terms of land preparation and harvest for faster and better quality of production...*continue to next page*



"Idi manual labor kami pelang ket narigat nga talaga para kanyami. Makapangan kami lang maminsan wenu mamin duwa iti maysa aldaw ta pasaray Php 300 lang met matanggananan mi bilang mannalon. Nu adda umanay igatang mi agserbi kusinan mayaten. Ngem tattan nga ada mabalbalin mi nga ag service provider, nasursuru mi payn nga panunuten nga dagituy nga maproduce mi nga crops ket para metlang kaka-ili'an mi," shared Mr. Bareng.

(When we were doing manual labor, it was really difficult for us. We can only eat at least once or twice a day because we only earn at least Php 300 as laborers. Back then, if we have something for our kitchen, we are already happy but not contended. But now that we are more capable and competent as service providers, we also learned how to consider the welfare of our community).

Problems encountered and Ways Forward

According to the beneficiaries, the number of clients in their municipality is increasing. This resulted in the association not being able to cater more clients. With this, the association is planning to purchase one additional unit of four-wheel drive tractor.

Furthermore, the sudden increase in gasoline prices had affected their usage of the tractor, which compelled them to increase their service fee as well.

Meanwhile, the group also plans to start selling feeds and other farm supplies in their...*continue to next page* barangay since the town proper is three (3) kilometers away from their barangay.

"Plano mi nga talaga agpatakder iti store tapnon aglako kami iti farm supplies dituy ayan mi ta adayu nga talaga iti centro dituy barangay mi. Agyaman kami unay amin nga tulong iti programa kadakami nga association" (We plan to establish a store for us to start venturing into farm supplies because we are aware that the town proper is too far from our barangay), expressed Ms. Tomat. ###

NegOr implementers undergo TOT...from p. 7

Mary Ronville M. Abaand Chief of Receipts, Investment, and Disbursement Division (RIDD) Isabel Cabrera from OPA Negros Oriental, and the Department of Agriculture RFO VII spearheaded and organized the training.

Conduct of trainings

This June, 98 participants were able to attend the trainings held in Bindoy, La Libertad, Ayungon, Tayasan, Basay, Sta. Catalina, Jimalalud, and Siaton. Meanwhile, a total of 43 attendees participated in the training sessions held in Pamplona and Guihulngan City this July. Looking forward, 25 farmers from ELCAC area in Sta. Catalina are set to attend the said training on July 27 to 28, 2022.

The participants were the officers from each group and were tasked to relay what they have learned to the rest of the members of their group.

During the conduct of the simultaneous organizational strengthening and agro-enterprise development training, DTI Negosyo Center Provincial Coordinator Michael Kristoffer Doyongan also graced the event.

Niforlyn B. Cadayona from Tayasan FA expressed her gratitude from the training, *"Daghang salamat sa training nga amoang nadawat karon. Nakahibalo mi unsaon pagsugod ug negosyo dungang makahatag namo ug income. Nanghinaot mi puhon managko among mga kanding nga makasugod mi ani."*

(Thank you so much for providing us with this training. I was able to learn the basics of starting a business which could give us additional income. I hope that our goats will grow soon for us to start venturing into a business related to goats).

The field training sessions were led by SAAD Provincial Program Management Support Office (PPMSO) staff Bindoy and Guihulngan City Area Coordinator John Mach Ogabang, Ayungon, Tayasan and Pamplona Area Coordinator Airine Bulgado, Basay Area Coordinator Randy Carpio, Siaton Area Coordinator May Pialogo, Sta. Catalina Area Coordinator Erwin Jr. Leyva, Jimalalud Area Coordinator Janaura Rivera, La Libertad Area Coordinator Via Marie Quibot, Negros Oriental IT Jessryl Saporteza, and Provincial Coordinator Jehson Campos. ###

Patience is a virtue...from p. 5



beneficiary and kept a gilt for breeding purposes.

While hog production in many areas in the country was halted due to ASF spread, fortunately, the local government unit (LGU) of Sta. Magdalena made the proper measures, such as isolation and animal checkpoints in the area to prevent the viral disease from affecting the farmers' drift of swine.

Furthermore, the remaining gilt was raised for 6 months which produced a total of 51 piglets within six cycles from May 2020-April 2022. Ms. Gadais sold 46 of them at Php 3,000.00-Php 4,000.00 each, while five were handed down to third-in-line beneficiaries who also had intentions to venture into swine



raising and breeding.

With the 46 piglets sold from June 2020-May 2022, Ms. Gadais accumulated a total income of Php149,500.00 from her swine production.

The earnings were allotted for Ms. Gadais' children's tuition fees, daily food consumption, pig pen reconstruction and extension, purchase of television and washing machine, and payment for their motorcycle's monthly installment fee. Having covered her monthly expenses made possible by her growing enterprise reflects on the effectiveness of the SAAD-provided swine production livelihood.

Ms. Gadais extended her gratitude to the SAAD Program. *"Salamatunon sa SAAD kay natagan kami sin urig na nag hatag man sin dako-dako na income na nakadanan sa pagbuhay sa sakuyang pamilya. Sana deretso gihapon an SAAD na makadanan sa iba na parauma para damo man an makapag asenon sa buhay arog ko,"* expressed Ms. Gadais.

(Thank you very much SAAD for granting us with pigs that gave us a profitable business and made my family's livelihood flourish. I hope that SAAD will continue to help other farmers so that they could also thrive in life like me).

Gadais' swine production plan

On June 18, 2022, the couple sold the initial native sow from SAAD for Php 21,000.00 and bought a new gilt for sow production purposes that will start this July.

As of now, the couple still works in their day jobs while managing the sustainability of their swine production. The earnings that they will be collecting will be used for the pig pen's improvement and expansion this year. ###

about saadvocacy

The SAADvocacy is a monthly newsletter produced by the Public Relations and Communications Cluster of the Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) Program, located at 3/F SAAD Office, Department of Agriculture New Building, Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines.

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.

The SAADvocacy Editorial Board reserves the right to edit and finalize all stories, prior to publication.

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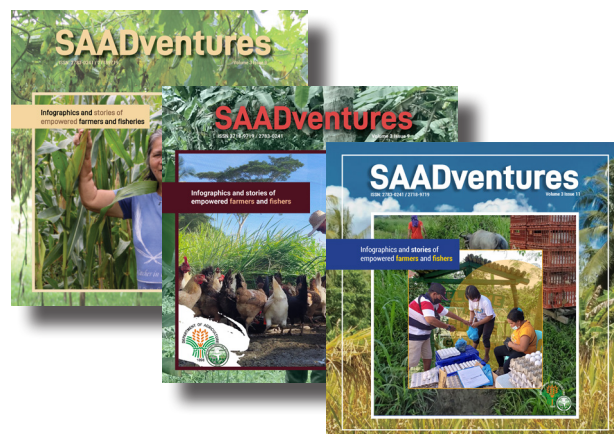
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saadventures

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