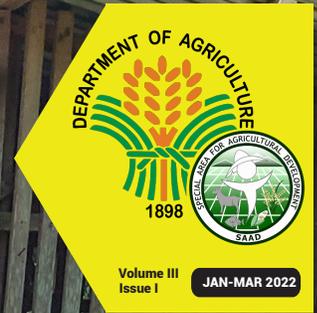


TUMAN

The Official Quarterly Newsletter of the Department of Agriculture - Caraga, Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) Program



REAWAKENING THE FIBER INDUSTRY IN CARAGA

San Luis farmers reinvest in abaca production

The Muritula USD Farmers' Association (MuFA) hails from the first-class municipality of San Luis in the province of Agusan del Sur. Situated in a landlocked province, MuFA members are accustomed to growing bananas and falcata, and raising backyard animals as primary sources of income. The FA, however, recognized the limitations of the said endeavors, which they described as "prone to price changes." This led them to look for additional undertakings.

In 2019, the then 50-member group became a recipient of the abaca production project funded by the Department of Agriculture – Caraga, Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD) Program.

Abaca is not new to MuFA. Municipal Agriculturist Ceasar G. Burdeos shared that San Luis was a top producer of abaca fibers, according to a report by the Land Bank of the Philippines in 1992. Recognizing the potential of the abaca fiber industry in the province,

MuFA sought abaca production as its main project funded through the Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) Program of the Department of Agriculture - Caraga.

MuFA aims to produce high-quality abaca fibers and consolidate them to have advantage control of their pricing. Additionally, with their abaca nursery completed this year, they are also venturing into producing abaca planting materials.

(to Page 2)



Muritula USAD Farmers' Association
Brgy. Muritula, San Luis, Agusan del Sur
80 members

(from Page 1)

Implementation

MuFA obtained Php 5,900,564.21-worth of abaca production support from the SAAD Program from FY 2019 to 2021.

For FY 2019, the FA obtained 35,000 abaca planting materials (suckers, seedlings) divided and planted by its 60 original members. Part of the Php 2.1 M support in the said year were fertilizers (Php 576,000) and pesticides (Php 210,000).

Under FY 2020 with an allocation of Php 2,549,489.71, the association received 11,110 abaca seedlings complete with fertilizers and pesticides support, which was planted by its 20 additional members and expanded their plantation to 10 hectares more.

In 2021, MuFA obtained another batch of 16,620 abaca corms, which expanded the association's abaca plantation to 70 hectares, and an abaca nursery with an irrigation system and abaca corms as startup inputs.

The Php 495,564-worth component project equips the association to produce planting materials and sell them for additional income.

Management Practices

MuFA allowed the rental of its machines and UV plastic shed to non-members inside and outside the community.

Out of the gross sales of every stripping, they implement a 10% rental fee to members and 13% for non-members. They also collect a rental fee of Php 0.50-1.00 for every kg of abaca fiber hung in their UV plastic shed. They use the income from rental for the maintenance of their machines.

Another related management practice is making practical use of the wastes produced from abaca stripping as substrate in their vermicomposting. They use the vermicast to fertilize their other plants.



The said initiative was made possible through the SAAD Program and Provincial Agriculture Office providing the inputs and construction materials and the Municipal Agriculture conducting the training.

Among the capability-building activities the FA underwent were a series of training on abaca production, pre, and post-harvest handling, and nursery establishment in coordination with the Philippine Fiber Development Authority (PhilFiDA). The training also tackled the different types and grades of abaca fibers, common pests and diseases, and their treatment.



Key Results

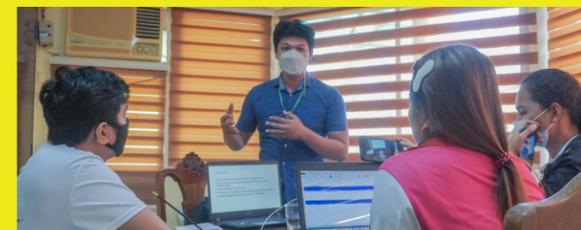
Part of the goal of the SAAD Program is to introduce relevant mechanized technologies to its farmer-partners to maximize their income. Relative to such, MuFA received two stripping machines (mobile and portable) and another one (mobile) under FY 2021.

Members of the associations who have existing abaca plantations now strip their abaca harvest through the machines rather than doing it manually (hand-stripping).

From 2019 to November 2021, FA members with existing plantations have processed a total of 7,136 kg of abaca fibers with an accumulated income of Php 555,626.00. Of the said volume of abaca fibers produced, 90% was classified as high-grade (S2) and sold at a high price.

"Dako gyud og kalahian ang produkto sa makina kompara sa demano. Karon mas mahal na ang palit sa among lanot, doble na ang presyo." said Antonino Real.

[There is a huge price difference between the fibers processed through the machines and the ones stripped manually. High-grade fibers (S2) are sold at around Php 80, which is double the price of the low-grade (Binaba)].



IT Officer Thoburn Gustillo of the SAAD national office visited the region to facilitate the IT database harmonization, March 7-11.

Harmonization of SAAD farmers' database

The DA-SAAD Caraga conducted a database orientation and harmonization with the staff of the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), March 7-11, 2022.

The activity aimed to speed up the uploading and updating of farmers' profiles to the national database, which is crucial in assessing the program's impact in the last four years (FY 2019-2022).

The UV plastic shed obtained by the FA in 2020 also contributes to the FA's goal to produce high-grade abaca fibers. MuFA now has a reliable facility that helps dry their abaca fibers in a matter of hours. This helps reduce the entire abaca stripping process, including stripping, into a day instead of taking a week.

The modern equipment introduced by the program equips MuFA to produce high-quality fibers efficiently.

"Pag abot sa SAAD na solbad gyud ang among problema (kabahin sa paghagkot). Ang abaca dire sa amo gina-laguras ra gyud, kasagaran malata na lang kay dili maapas. Karon dako kaayog kalahian. Ang usa ka semana nga pag hagkot makaya na sulod sa usa ka adlaw," said Santos Escalicas, MuFA President.

[The SAAD Program has been a big help to all members of MuFA. We used to strip our abaca harvest manually. But given how tedious the process was, we could not process them all, which is why some ended up rotting. Now, with the stripping machines from the program, what used to take us a week of stripping is possible in a day or two.]

Plans

By 2022, MuFA envisions becoming an established cooperative, taking the lead in consolidating the abaca fibers they produce and negotiating directly with bulk buyers. They will also start selling the abaca planting materials produced from their very own nursery. With the production and mechanization support through the DA-SAAD Program, the 80-member MuFA rekindles their hope in the abaca fiber industry, securing a stable livelihood in the years ahead.

SAAD Caraga rolls out 2022 training; trains Bislig farmers on org development



Members of Chicken Raisers Association of Burbuanan (CRAB) participating in 'straw tower building' activity during the training on effective organizational development with Almar Autida of LGU-Bislig as resource speaker, February 3-4.

Twenty-seven (27) farmer-partners of the Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) Program in Bislig City participated in the training on effective organizational development held at Brgy. Burboanan, Bislig City, February 3-4.

The two-day lecture workshop tackled the functions of an organization, the duties and responsibilities of its members, and the rights and privileges of members.

Members of the Chicken Raisers Association of Burbuanan (CRAB) participated in the said training. They received an egg production project in 2019 through the SAAD Program of the Department of Agriculture - Caraga.

Bislig City Cooperative Development Officer Almar B. Autida served as the resource person of the training. Among the points Autida emphasized is the importance of *lihog, serbisyo ug sakripisyo* [action, service, and sacrifice], which according to him, are fundamental to sustain an organization.

DA Regional Technical Director for Operations Rebecca R. Atega also highlighted the purpose of the training that is to strengthen the association and improve the management skills of its members.

"The association will not progress if it is divided, and its members lack commitment and dedication. As such, we should develop these values. Consistent with the mandate of the DA, this training will help strengthen your association and ready you all for the challenges along the way," she added. RTD Atega is also the focal person of the SAAD Program in the region.

The training is part of the 67 trainings the program laid out this year for its 32 assisted associations in Agusan del Sur and Surigao del Sur.

Training on organizational, farm management skills

Sixty-three (63) farmers assisted by the DA-Special Area for Agricultural Development Program in Lingig and Bislig City, Surigao del Sur, underwent simultaneous trainings on vegetable production; and organizational development from February 8-11, 2022.

The trainings were among the 67 capability-building activities designed by the program this year to further capacitate its 32 assisted farmers' associations as they transition into agri-preneurship.



Members of Goat Raisers' Association of Sitio Sanyata, Bislig City, Surigao del Sur, participate in a training on vegetable production, February 8-9.

Training on poultry postharvest technology and meat processing



Members of the Cosep People's Organization (COPO) in Rosario, Agusan del Sur, participated in training on postharvest technology for poultry production, March 3, 2022.

The 25-member COPO is a recipient of the SAAD-funded abaca and native production projects under FY 2019-2022. The training also tackled proper egg incubation and meat cutting.

Livestock Coordinator Minda Manliguez of the Provincial Veterinary Office-ADS served as the resource person for the training. Personnel from the Municipal Agriculture Office - Rosario, led by Municipal Agriculturist Delia O. Valenzuela, and SAAD Area Coordinator Ariel Obillos facilitated the activity.

SAAD Caraga introduces low-cost feed production to Carmen farmers



Members of Cancavan Corn Growers' Association with training resource person Euniel Atalo of the DA Regulatory Division (1st row, 1st from right)

Seventeen (17) poultry farmers assisted by the DA Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) Program in Carmen, Surigao del Sur, learned about low-cost feed formulation and production, March 22-23.

The training imparted the value of producing low-cost feeds as a practical initiative of the Cancavan Corn Growers Association, recipient of the SAAD-funded poultry production project (FY 2019-2022).

By making their feeds, the association's expenses are expected to lessen, and, in turn, they can maximize their income. Euniel G. Atalo of the DA

Euniel G. Atalo of the DA Regulatory Division served as the training resource person. Atalo elaborated on the appropriate poultry nutrition, feed formulation, and processing, including types, standard mixing ratio, nutrient composition, and proper handling and storage.

The training also covered the importance of feed formulation as a sustainability effort of the association in the years ahead.

CCGA will use corn and soybeans as the main inputs for their feeds. Under FY 2022, the FA will receive hammer mill, pelletizer, feed mixer, and feed formulation materials to support the said initiative.

SAAD Caraga extends production, organizational training to Agusan Sur farmers



Members of Culiram SAAD Farmers' Association (CuSAFA) gather for the 'people's organization strengthening and development' training with Gina Mondejar of MAO-Talacogon (1st row, 2nd from left) as the resource speaker, March 1.

Two farmers' groups assisted by the DA Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) Program in San Luis and Talacogon, Agusan del Sur, underwent in a training on poultry production and meat processing, and people's organization strengthening and development on February 28 and March 1.

The participating FAs include the Cecelia Abaca Corn Planters' Association in San Luis, engaging in native chicken and abaca production projects; and Culiram SAAD Farmers' Association in Talacogon, engaging in abaca production project.

SAAD Regional Focal Rebecca R. Atega reiterated in her message at Brgy Culiram, Talacogon, March 1, that among the goals of the program is to help secure food supply amidst the pandemic and unpremeditated crisis.

"As we near the end of Phase 1, the DA and the SAAD Program aspire for all of you to become established entrepreneurs. You are already a group, so you have an advantage in accessing other services from the DA. Before such, work on strengthening your association and becoming a cooperative," Director Atega added.

Livestock Coordinator Minda Manliguez of Provincial Veterinary Office-ADS led the training on poultry production and making salted eggs among CeAbCoPa members, while Gina Mondejar of Municipal Agriculture Office-Talacogon facilitated the PO strengthening among CuSAFA members.

SAAD Area Coordinator Richard Lalisán also led the PO Strengthening among CeAbCoPa members.



Representatives of the 100-member Cecelia Abaca Corn Planters' Association from San Luis, ADS join the back-to-back training on meat processing and organizational development from February 28 to March 1, 2022.

Regional team conducts feedbacking with Lingig farmer-partners

Representatives of the DA Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD) Program regional support office, led by Focal Person Rebecca R. Atega, visited the Pamian Timberland Farmers' Association (PTFA), a SAAD-assisted group engaging in native chicken production in Lingig, Surigao del Sur, February 11.

Sitio Pamian, Brgy. Bogac, where PTFA is situated, is considered a geographically isolated and disadvantaged area (GIDA). In Lingig alone, the SAAD Program has supported eight farmers' groups with native chicken and native goat production projects since 2019.

During the dialogue with the farmers, Regional Technical Director Atega emphasized the purpose of the SAAD-funded livelihood interventions.

"Through this poultry production project that you identified early on, we hope that you will have a stable means of income and eventually transition into agri-preneurship. We also encourage you to diversify your products by pursuing other commodities. Such will help ensure that your endeavors will be sustainable, which has always been our shared goal," Atega added.

On the same day, PTFA members also underwent training on Poultry Production and Health Management cum Entrepreneurial Development, which started on February 10.

Senior Science Research Specialist Catherine Joy R. Tortola of DA Del Monte Lowland Rain-fed Research Station and Livestock Coordinator Rogelio Arayani of the Municipal Agriculture Office - Lingig served as the resource persons.



Regional Technical Director Rebecca R. Atega (in pink) led the dialogue and feedbacking with PTFA members, February 11



This year, the program laid out 67 training on organizational development and communication, among others, for its 32 assisted associations in the region.

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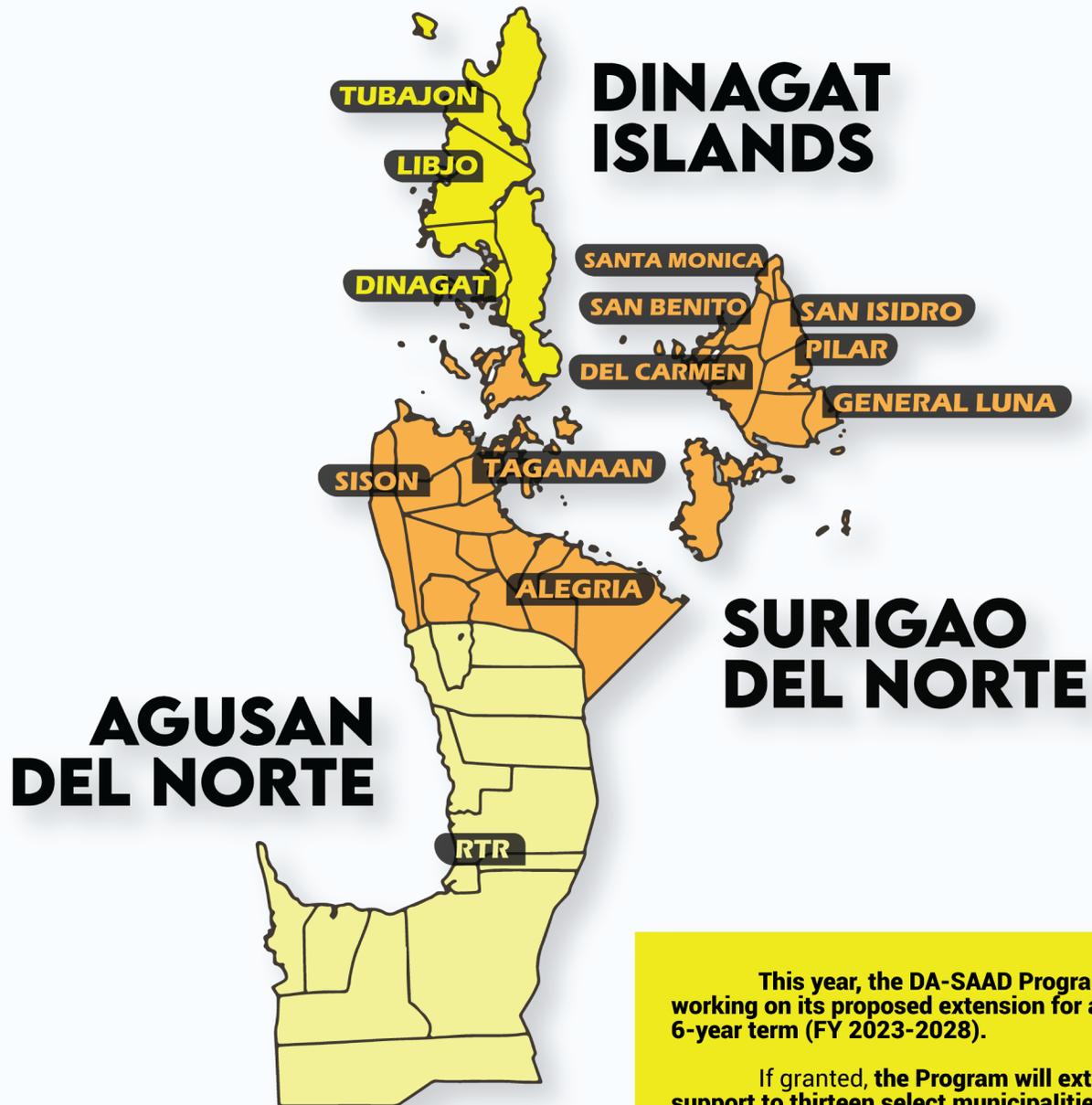
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PRIORITY AREAS FOR SAAD **PROPOSED EXPANSION**



This year, the DA-SAAD Program is working on its proposed extension for another 6-year term (FY 2023-2028).

If granted, the Program will extend support to thirteen select municipalities in the Province of Dinagat Islands (PDI), Surigao del Norte (SDN), and Agusan del Norte (ADN), which are not covered in Phase 1 (FY 2019-2022).

