

SAAD *vocacy*

The official newsletter of the Special Area for Agricultural Development Program

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by Bart Manoguid and Jessamae Gabon

QUEZON CITY, December 6, 2022 – Banking on the learnings from the Phase 1 implementation, the Department of Agriculture – Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD) in partnership with the DA CALABARZON (RFO 4A) initiated the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) Workshop for old and new region implementers as a head start aimed at providing essential tools and important principles on community organizing...*Featured, p.4*



EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES

Banana planting materials awarded to five farmer groups in OccMin

by Dianne Francis A. Sy-Gorembalem



OCCIDENTAL MINDORO, November 1, 2022 – Aiding in the decline of banana production in the province, the Department of Agriculture – Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD) Program MiMaRoPa awarded banana planting materials worth Php 499,000.00 to five (5) Tagalog and indigenous Mangyan SAAD farmers associations (FAs) in Calintaan and Sablayan, Occidental Mindoro.

Each association received banana suckers (sweet plantain variety) under the Banana Production Project FY 2022, serving as an additional livelihood, complementing their existing rice production and swine raising aside from the Program's intervention...*continue to p. 2*

DA-SAAD 10 grants incubators, trains beneficiaries from ELCAC areas

by Andrea Dawn E. Boycillo



BUKIDNON, November 10, 2022 – To ensure continuous egg production, two (2) units of egg incubators worth Php 99,000 were turned over to the members of the Anlag Ani Tapukanan Consumers Cooperative and some former rebel-beneficiaries last October 5-6, 2022, under the FY 2021 savings fund of the Department of Agriculture – Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD) Program.

The provision of the 500-egg capacity incubators is part of the DA's support to Executive Order No. 70, or to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (ELCAC).

Aside from the turn-over, operational demonstration for the said machine was carried out for the recipients to properly operate, maintain, and manage its use. The turnover was facilitated through the Philippine Army's 58th Infantry Battalion (58th IB) and 88th Infantry Battalion (88th IB).

In addition, the DA-SAAD 10 held a free-range chicken production training for the said participants, joined by the soldiers, and members of the Citizen Armed Force Geographical Unit (CAFGU).

There were 23 participants from the 58th IB and 40 participants...*continue to p. 2*

Banana planting materials awarded...from p. 1

According to Calintaan's Municipal Commodity Investment Plan 2021-2023, banana production follows rice production in the municipality's commodity prioritization in 2021 although they recorded a decline in production of 3,278.05 metric tons (MT) in 2020 from 4,043.49 MT in 2019 due to calamities, such as typhoon Ursula, Tisoy, Quinta, and even Southwest Monsoon Habagat, in the past five (5) years.

Consequently, Sablayan has also listed a decline in banana production from 13,920.613 MT in 2020 to 12,782.57 MT in 2021 according to the Office of the Municipal Agriculturist (OMA) Ecological Profile 2021. The 1,138.049 MT decrease in production is likewise attributed to typhoons that devastated plantations which damaged the crops.

Said project under DA-SAAD Program aims to assist in the recuperation from the damages incurred primarily to increasing banana production in Calintaan and Sablayan.

With an average of 36.3 kilograms (kg) of banana per tree, the 7,000 planting materials is expected to bear 256.2 MT after seven (7) to ten (10) months in the ideal cultivation setting.

Farmers of El MCGA and SaMaKi from Calintaan and the FAs situated in Sablayan are involved in rice production for livelihood, planting bananas on the borders of their lands to maximize their areas.

According to Mr. Edgar Espiritu, chairperson of El MCGA, members of their association plant banana trees mainly for personal consumption as of now.

"Nagtatanim kami ng saging sa paligid ng mga palayan namin. Kadalasan, pansarili lang na konsumo ang naaani namin dahil kaunti lang naman ang tanim namin. Nagbebenta kami pero madalang, nasa Php 30.00 kada kilo sa mga kapitbahay para pandagdag kita," shared Mr. Espiritu.

(We plant banana trees around our rice fields. Often, the bananas we harvest are for personal consumption since we only have a few trees. We sell bananas occasionally to our neighbors for Php 30.00 per kilo for additional income.)

For members of RIC Akasyahan, banana production serves as an additional livelihood as they can also sell bananas for additional income and utilize banana tree parts as supplementary activity for swine raising.

"Noon na walang feeds, pipinuhin namin ang katawan ng puno ng saging na namunga na tapos lulutuin ito at hahaluhan ng binlid. Gustong-gusto ng mga alaga naming baboy," shared Ms. Rosamar Valdoz, chairperson of the all-

DA-SAAD 10 grants incubators, trains beneficiaries...from p. 1

rom the 88th IB, led by Veterinarian Dr. Dianara Celeste O. Ua-o and Mr. Raymund L. Bornea of SAAD as speakers of the training.

Prior to the training, beneficiaries received 100 free-range chicken delivered to the 58th IB and CAFGU members and 110 free-range chickens delivered to the 88th IB last June 2022. DA-SAAD 10 also conducted monitoring activities to provide status of the free-range chicken raised at the 88th IB's farm.

The poultry animals were sourced from the SAAD Chicken Multiplier Farm in the DA's Research Center for Upland Development (RCUD) station of Dangcagan, Bukidnon. The incubators were provided last October 5 and 6 to optimize

production efficiency and assist the mother hens from hatching eggs. "This training is one of the many opportunities that would expose them to developing their long-term livelihood," said CAA Julio Romano Compas, a member of the Anlag Ani Tapukanan Consumers Cooperative.

The former rebels, most of them housed at the headquarters of the 58th IB and 88th IB, are the beneficiaries of the SAAD interventions and the ones involved in raising the free-range chicken provided by SAAD.

DA-10 continuously provides agricultural assistance such as provision of poultry, livestock, and agricultural machinery and equipment and the conduct of training as part of the government's pursuit of peace and to uplift the lives of the beneficiaries in partnership with the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC). ###



women farmers of RIC Akasyahan.

(Back in the day when feeds were not available, we would finely chop banana foliage and cook it with binlid or small, broken particles of milled rice. Our swine really enjoy this meal.)

Integrated livelihood: livestock

SAAD FAs in the municipalities of Calintaan and Sablayan became part of the program in 2022. In addition to banana planting materials, FAs in Calintaan under the said project also

received cattle inputs in June 2022 which aims to integrate banana and cattle production.

Integrated interventions' goal is to provide farmers multiple sources of income.

Banana production can be considered a short-term income generating source as long as they bear fruits, while cattle production is a long-term income generating project since it requires a certain amount of time to raise.

The cattle production project was given

under the Banana Production following the integrated livelihood strategy.

On the awarding of the intervention, Municipal Mayor Dante C. Esteban of Calintaan, Ms. Nelia Oreiro, Municipal Agriculturist, and staff from OMA assisted with the turnover in Calintaan, while OMA - Sablayan staff assisted in the awarding in their municipality. ###

Solar power system eases prod'n of Bayabas poultry farmers

by Mark Angelo C. Pineda

SURIGAO DEL SUR, November 4, 2022 – Department of Agriculture – Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD) Program awarded one (1) kilowatt solar power system unit to Balete Chicken Growers Association (BACGA) aiding in the incubation of stocks as power interruption frequents the community.

For long-term cost-efficient



chicken production providing continuous power supply for chick incubation, the BACGA finally installed the solar power system worth Php 147,950.00 in their community and project site in Brgy. Balete, Bayabas in September 2022.

Aside from the poultry project given by the Program, BACGA members are also engaged in fishing, rice and coconut production, and backyard farming. The poultry project intervention is a goal to diversify variety of food and multiple sources of income for the beneficiaries.

Association President Nenita Dalayan said the alternative power system lessens egg damages from frequent power interruptions in the locality that usually last two (2) or more days.

"Dako nga katabang ang solar kay kung mag brownout naa na ang solar ug ma less ang among kuryente. Usa pud tabang sa among pag incubate nga ma minus ang damage gikan sa sige nga brownout," Mrs. Dalayan expressed.

(The solar power system is a big help for us if there are power interruptions, we can simply use solar (unit) and it will lessen our electricity expenses. Also since we use an incubator it will reduce the damage (egg) from frequent power interruptions.)

BACGA is a recipient of the SAAD-funded native chicken production alongside eight (8) other FAs in the province. The project worth Php 3,225,724.51 comprises native chicken, poultry houses, incubators, and technical assistance including production and organizational development training provided yearly from FY 2019-2022. Their current product lines are eggs, liveweight chicken, and chicks.

BACGA is the first FA supported by the SAAD Program that received a solar power system in FY 2022. Former Program Director Myer G. Mula during his visit in August 2021, suggested the intervention upon learning the group pays an average of Php 2,000.00 per month for electricity usage.

Production status

BACGA was organized as an association in 2019 through SAAD's assistance. The group started selling eggs, liveweight chicken, and chicks

in 2020. As of September 2022, the association reported a total gross income of Php 181,544.00.

Towards sustainability: Post-SAAD BACGA members also participated in training on low-cost feed production on October 10, 2022, conducted by DA-Caraga Regulatory Division. Making feeds sourced from locally available raw materials, aims to reduce expenses from buying commercial feeds.

The SAAD Phase 1 implementation culminates this year, which entails the end of input support to the FA by FY 2023. The solar power system is among the sustainable, cost-effective measures toward sustainability of the FA's production in the years ahead.

Even with the exclusion of Bayabas municipality in the second phase of implementation, the Program will stretch to other provinces in Caraga, including Surigao del Norte, Province of Dinagat Islands, and Agusan del Norte to cater to new batches of beneficiaries for Phase 2.

During the SAAD stakeholders meeting last September, BACGA laid out plans for post-SAAD Phase 1 implementation.

Upon turnover of the SAAD project to the local government of Bayabas in 2023, the FA plans to register their farm as a learning site for other farmers to visit and learn from their production strategies. They also eye to disperse one pair of breeder chickens to all members to expand their production outside the project site. The members agreed to give one pair back once they produced enough chicks.

President Dalayan committed to sustaining the association and its projects even without direct assistance from the SAAD Program. She shared that seeking support outside the program is crucial to the sustainability of the FA.

Further, as part of the plan to formally conclude the Program in the municipality DA-SAAD will conduct a Turn-over Plan Workshop in November to discuss commitments and ways forward this time, with the Municipal Government of Bayabas for the sustainability of the FAs endeavors post-SAAD. ###



We are finally on the last issue of the SAADVOCACY for SAAD Phase 1. It has been a fruitful year for us and the beneficiaries. Our greatest milestone is the program's approved extension which is now awaiting its budget under the General Appropriations Act (GAA). This means that we will still be together for the next phase, but with new stories of development as new beneficiaries come along.

With this, I am sending my deepest gratitude to the Program beneficiaries, the farmers and fishers who are the backbone of our economy and pivotal actors in agricultural development. Their stories would not exist if not for their openness and perseverance to lead their development through agriculture.

To all the implementers, the success of the Program lies in your valuable time and prolific effort in serving SAAD's mandate to contribute to poverty alleviation and food security in the marginalized areas of the country.

There will be internal revisions in the structure and implementing guidelines designed to improve the service rendered by SAAD. These changes are made to strengthen the structure that supports the implementation and ensures the maximization of resources dedicated mainly to the beneficiaries.

To our readers, I would like to thank you for following our stories, and the story of SAAD. You are the ears that heed the voices of the people who for the longest time became acquainted with silence and remained unnoticed. We ask for your continuous patronage.

Meanwhile, in this issue of SAADVOCACY please indulge yourself in the stories of our beneficiaries from Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. As always, may these stories bring you a wider perspective on the landscape of the Program's agricultural development efforts and its impact on the beneficiaries, their community, and consequently overall nation-building.



TOWARDS CBES



Apayao FA ventures to farm supply thru egg production enterprise

by Kathleen Faye B. Agonoy

APAYAO, November 8, 2022 – Motivated to find ways to expand their livelihood resources, farmers from the Emilia, Capannikian, San Antonio (ECASAN) Farmers Association (FA) are set to establish a farm supply store from income generated under the Poultry and Egg Production Project of the Department of Agriculture – Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD) Program.

Among the 30 farmers and members of the ECASAN from barangays Emilia, Capannikian, and San Antonio, 16 first-in-line beneficiaries received poultry inputs worth Php 419,120.00 in August 2021, which include 480 head of free-range chicken (80 male, 400 female), with anti-infectives, chicken grower, layer mash, corn grits, rice bran,

incubator, and plastic crates.

The project was proposed by the association after a community consultation since most of them were already poultry raisers. Aside from poultry-raising, they also grow varied crops such as vegetables, corn, and rice.

Chicken egg production enterprise

Recently identified as a community-based enterprise (CBE), the ECASAN FA accumulated a total of Php 17,466.02 income from selling chicken eggs and surrendering agreed contributions for the association's savings. The agreement requires the members to share 20 pieces of eggs to the association monthly. The first batch of beneficiaries were chosen for having prior experience in poultry-raising and an existing 30 square meters backyard area to raise the chickens. Each of the first-in-line beneficiaries received at

least 30 head of free-range chickens.

Members also have the liberty to strategize to enrich and expand their poultry and egg production. One of the members named Inang Saling breeds the free-range chicken from SAAD with her existing stocks and sells its offspring for additional income.

According to Mr. Francisco B. Arimatea, chairperson of ECASAN FA, the association sells their farm produce to nearby barangays and towns. Their expenses include feeds and biologics for their maintenance costs.

Currently, original stocks from the program are becoming unproductive due to aging. However, Mr. Arimatea then shared that they will be addressing the problem by using the incubator included in the project to maintain their production.

"Aware kami met nga daytoy nga project ket adda patingga iti lifestan na. Isu nga ita paylang ket madama kamin ulit agpapaado iti stocks tapno ma-maintain iti sustainability na daytoy nga project," he said.

(We are aware that this project has a lifespan. That's why we are now repopulating the stocks to ensure the sustainability of the project.)

Moreover, the group was so grateful for the opportunity given by the program.

"Dakel iti pasalamat mi iti SAAD ta mayas kami nga napagasatan nga grupo nga makaawat iti manok. Dakel nga tuloy iti agbalin nga beneficiary," expressed Mr. Arimatea.

(We're so grateful to SAAD for choosing us as a recipient of these chickens. It is a huge help to become a beneficiary of this program.)

Last March, ECASAN was rated among one of the highest and outstanding 45 FAs in the province by the PPMISO in partnership with the Municipal Government that conducted its Organizational Development and Management Training. It is hoped that through the program, the associations will continue to prosper in agripreneurship.

Plans

Their earnings from the egg production will be saved for the construction of their farm supply store, which will be located at Brgy. Capannikian.

"Kayat mi padakkelen detuy investment mi, isu nga napanunut mi ti agpatakder iti paglakwan iti farm supply tapno nu makatulong kami payn iti kakarabuba mi nga haan unoy maka-kaya nga mapan idiy market ta narigat it lugan dituy nga pang public," shared Mr. Arimatea.

(We want to increase our investment, that's why we thought of setting up a farm supply store, and that way we can also help our neighbors who can't always go to the market because of lack of transportation.)

The group will proceed to the reproduction to replace the old stock. Meanwhile, SAAD Apayao will be endorsing the association to the LGU for additional partnership among government agencies such as with the Technical Education and Skill Development Authority (TESDA) and the Department of Science and Technology (DOST). This is to ensure the sustainability of the project after the Phase 1 implementation of the SAAD Program. ###

SAAD Program conducts PRA Workshop...from p.1

The PRA Workshop is a capacity reinforcement activity for the implementers and a crucial part of the social preparation component of the SAAD Program geared to intensify and improve precision planning. PRA mainly promotes community-led holistic environmental and social study of areas that can extract valuable information for planning development projects tailored to the receivers.

In his opening message, SAAD Program Director Ulysses J. Lustria, Jr. underlined the importance of PRA for determining the most suitable assistance for SAAD beneficiaries in continuous pursuit of its goals: food security, competitive production, sustainability, and establishment of community-

based-enterprise. "PRA is done to make sure that livelihood projects are suitable and appropriate for beneficiaries. PRA can help us identify livelihood projects for Phase 2 *na bagay sa isang lugar at sa market system sa loob ng area,*" Dir. Lustria shared.

The workshop ran for five (5) days through a team-teaching method that laid down PRA fundamental principles and practices through extensive and interactive lectures. SAAD's partner and lecturers are PRA practitioners and experts from different programs and research projects from the DA-CALABARZON – an incoming SAAD region for Phase 2, starting in 2023.

PRA is a participatory and interdisciplinary research approach that aims to utilize sustainable and resource conservation methods to guide policies and planning geared at improving the economic,





and socio-cultural conditions of identified communities. While participant-led, the dialogue extracts important environmental, cultural, agricultural, and economic information through a guided exchange to develop PRA reports.

Mr. Wilmer S. Faylon headed the resource team, DA-SAAD CALABARZON Focal Person, who discussed Problem Ranking, Problem Cause Diagram, Possible Solution Ranking, and Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) Analysis and Action Planning among others.

For compatibility and feasibility studies with considerations to geologic, topographic, and

meteorologic make-up of areas relative to agriculture is the Agro-Ecosystem Mapping led by Mr. John Carlo P. Narvacan – Science Research Technician. Ms. Maria Riza G. Panopio, Science Research Specialist (SRS) expounded on Timeline & Trend Analysis, and Mr. Girsy V. Anda (SRS) on Seasonal Calendar, Cost and Return, Resource Flow, and Institutional Diagram – all essential tools to know the historical data, analyze the interrelationship of problems in the community and predict market opportunities for agri-production.

The PRA also aims to bridge the gap between the student (development workers) and the studied (communities), where realities on the ground are thoroughly described. This is to avoid irrational and presumptive projects whose concept and context come from the assumptions and theories of the researchers.

SAAD plans to conduct the PRA as the program welcomes a new set of beneficiaries. Meanwhile, SAAD graduates (Phase 1 beneficiaries) are endorsed to the local government and banner programs following the “small brother-big brother” principle.

SAAD NPMO Program Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) Head Mr. Darwin Pamatmat reminded all participants to use the activity as a testing ground for using the PRA tool on the field. *“Aside sa dialecto, ang problema ay kung paano natin maiintindihan ang ating kausap. Kailangan maintindihan natin ang pangangailangan ng farmers at maipaabot ang solusyon para sa kanila,”* Mr. Pamatmat stressed.

(Aside from the dialect, our problem is how to understand who we are talking to. We need to understand the needs of farmers to deliver the solutions for them.)

Mr. Pamatmat presented the suggested PRA guidelines for Phase 2 implementation and got each participant’s commitment on when PRA should start regionally in 2023.

The PRA is a community-led and centered activity utilized in the planning phase of development projects anchored in identifying opportunities and challenges in the pre-implementation of the program. Coming from fostering participation from the communities, the PRA aims to exercise people’s voice, and duty to partake in decision-making, empower communities towards ownership, influence, and control their progress in development. ###

SUCCESS STORIES



Growing egg-economy: Matunoy FA's journey

by Aimee Lou D. Madjus

Background

The Matunoy Farmers Association (MFA) in the municipality of Gutalac is one of the beneficiaries of the Department of Agriculture – Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD) Program in Zamboanga del Norte.

MFA members are farmers of all sorts. The majority of them cultivate upland and lowland rice, other crops, as well as coconut, while others raise chickens and have carabaos used in farming.

Matunoy Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative was organized into a “kapundok”, a local cebuano dialect that translates to “in a group” and was initially composed of 10 members.

Each member agreed to contribute Php 1 per day as savings to build up funds for the kapundok to be deposited in a bank as the group’s savings. This sparked the interest of Matunoy residents to join the cooperative which eventually led to a

growth of 112 members in the year 2000.

In 2017, during the Program’s pilot year of implementation, DA-SAAD reached the municipality of Gutalac with the aim to provide livelihood and increase sources of income in the locality.

In the Program’s fifth year in the municipality, 52 active members of MFA were granted the FY 2021 Layer Chicken-Egg Production worth Php 1,209,800. Said project is eyed to be developed as a community-based enterprise through egg business in Gutalac.

The egg business of MFA in its first month exhibited success after a profit return of Php 124,812.50 from selling fresh eggs for the whole month of September 2022 alone.

One year and five (5) months into the project, 18,855 trays...*continue to p. 6*

Growing egg-economy: Matunoy FA's journey...from p. 5

of fresh and affordable eggs were harvested in different sizes and were sold to their regular customers who buy in bulk, and some sold to market vendors.

Project Management

With sheer grit and determination to sustain the project, members of MFA conduct monthly meetings where they present their financial status and plans to expand their poultry by purchasing additional stocks of chicken. This is to address the sufficiency of fresh eggs supply in the locality especially now that face-to-face classes are being implemented.

After every meeting, the group does a general cleaning of the poultry housing and at the end of the day, they go home bringing a portion of eggs for each member as their small incentive.

The FA employed two members as caretakers assigned to clean the

poultry house, egg harvesting, as well as sorting and marketing the eggs. Each of them receives Php 5,000 every month.

"We decided to not distribute our members' share yet until we can assure that we can replenish all these chickens once they will be culled, fortunately, the members are patient and eager enough to ensure the sustainability of the project because they know it is all for us," MFA president Ricardo Daga said.

With hopes to expand their project, the FA commits to continue their best practices such as putting rice hull under the cages to minimize poultry odor, monthly general cleaning, and ensuring the eggs will be sold in three days at most after harvest to maintain the freshness of the products.

The chickens are due for culling by the end of November 2022 as the RTLs will reach 18 months of producing eggs. The association's money saved in the bank and the income from selling the culled chickens will be spent on purchasing new stocks. ###



scan to see inputs received and egg production of MFA

A-maize-ing Ratagnon-Mangyan farmers earn Php 504k from SAAD corn project

by Dianne Francis A. Sy-Gorembalem

OCCIDENTAL MINDORO, November 29, 2022 –

Indigenous Ratagnon-Mangyan farmers recorded a cumulative harvest of 28 metric tons (MT) yellow corn, while offering post-harvest services out of Corn Production Project FY 2020-2021 from the Department of Agriculture – Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD) Program.

The Sitio Calachuchi, Alibog Corn Farmers Association (CACFA) earned Php 504,348.00 gross income from producing

28 metric tons (MT) of yellow corn.

The group took advantage of farming machines granted by the SAAD Program that transitioned their manual threshing and milling practices into mechanized process, significantly cutting time and labor resources from the farmers, and gaining extra income as these services were offered to other farmers in the community.

Situated in the mountainous area of Magsaysay, members of CACFA are dependent mostly on yellow corn production for their livelihood, cultivating an estimated cumulative area of 17.5

hectares (ha). The farmers prepare for planting corn around May to July, utilizing rain for irrigation.

Modernizing corn production processes

After 105-110 days, corn is harvested and sun-dried for two (2) to three (3) days to remove the kernels from the husks. The kernels will then be solar dried for another three (3) days before they are ready for sale.

Before the SAAD Program's intervention, the Mangyan Indigenous People (IP) farmers would use gudgaran for threshing, an equipment usually made out of nails and wood to manually remove corn kernels from the husk. According to the members of CACFA, a 50 kilogram (kg) sack of corn usually takes a day to finish, taking them more time before they can sell their product.

On the other hand, corn milling for food consumption was only possible by using a gilingang kahoy, or a manual wooden milling machine. According to Mr. Rosendo E. de Juan, CACFA's chairperson, two (2) kg of corn kernels takes more than an hour to reach its size for food consumption.

In 2021, SAAD Program awarded a corn thresher and corn mill under Corn Production Project FY 2021 to assist the farmers in transitioning to mechanized farming practice, along with other complementary interventions to assist with corn production.

SAAD Program also provided capability building on corn production for the beneficiaries in August 2022 with the assistance of the Municipal Agricultural Office (MAO) of Magsaysay.

The equipment drastically reduced the time for processing corn, as hours of manual labor are minimized to minutes of threshing and milling.

"Ngayon na may [corn] miller at thresher na kami, ang dali na mag-giling at mag-giik. Marami rin sa aming mga miyembro ang nahikayat na magtanim nang mas malawak dahil may gamit na kami para mas madaling makapagbenta," Mr. de Juan said.

(Now that we have corn miller and thresher, it is easier to mill and thresh. A lot of our members were encouraged to expand their land for corn production because we have the equipment for faster market opportunities.)

Expanding the mesh of a-maize-ing opportunities

The CACFA saw the opportunity for another income-generating activity for their association. The FA is currently offering threshing and milling services to farmers in their community. For threshing service, the association charges 10% of the corn volume (usually per sack) pre-threshing as service fee, while for the milling service, the group collects Php 3.00 per kilo.

The group accumulated Php 19,060.00 from their threshing services, 60% of which were divided among seven (7) operators while the remaining 40% proceeded to the association's funds.

On the other hand, the milling services generated a gross income of Php 5,888.00. Half of the income (50%) was divided among the three (3) operators and the other half will be added to the group's funds which will be used to cover maintenance expenses.

Mr. Rosendo also shared how their association is planning to reach more market chains to cater, such as poultry supply stores in nearby municipalities. Yellow corn by-products are used for animal feed and have a high demand in the municipality.

This will provide another source of income to the farmers besides selling shelled corn with prices ranging from Php 14.00 to Php 20.00 depending on its quality.

Furthermore, to achieve sustainability and seamless operations, CACFA is also working out other means to acquire other farm equipment and trailer to be used for transporting goods. The FA wants to explore other options to avail other services offered by their local government unit in terms of agricultural inputs' aid. ###



scan to see corn production inputs of CACFA

Bontoc IP members enhance skills on meat processing and marketing

by Florde Liza A. Afidchao



MOUNTAIN PROVINCE, November 24, 2022

– In partnership with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) in the Mountain Province, the Department of Agriculture-Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD) Program conducted a training on Meat Processing, Labeling and Marketing with Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) for the members of the Derway Farmers Organization (DFO) from the Bontoc tribe. The one-day training aims to ensure and uphold safety and high quality in food production.

The DFO is a rural-based farmers' association in Alab Oriente, Bontoc, Mountain Province which is composed of thirty (30) members. They were organized on April 2, 2021 to carry out programs of the government and non-government agencies, especially in the conduct of livelihood interventions in their area. Further, it was also registered under the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and the DA in the same year.

The DFO members are mostly small rice and Highland Value Crops (HVC) producers, local farm labor service providers, stay-at-home mothers, senior citizens, and livestock and poultry raisers whose income falls below the poverty line.

The DFO is one of the farmers associations (FAs) in Bontoc who was granted the Poultry Production and Marketing Project in 2021 and Enhancement Broiler Production Project for FY 2022. One of the end-goals of their project is to create a community-based enterprise by processing and marketing chicken meat products produced locally. With this, a training was conducted to further enhance their skills in meat processing and marketing. Ten members from DFO attended the training.

Jones Malwagay, the Senior Trade Industry Development Specialist under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) of the DTI in Mountain Province, shared his knowledge on basic hygiene for food processors, sanitation guidelines, proper packaging and labeling of products, as well as the legal basis of the food processing and packaging practices.

The participants were also trained on proper management of the processing area, such as the organization of utensils and other materials for easy access, wearing the proper outfit, and proper

handling of products during the processing.

In his discussion, Mr. Malwagay emphasized the significance of packaging and labeling. He explained that proper packaging is important since it protects the product from contaminants when transported, stored, or used. However, thorough sanitation of the packaging material must be observed to avoid transmission of contaminants to the products. He further discussed that labeling must always come with the packaging as it tells significant information about the products being sold to the customers.

Lastly, Malwagay briefed the participants on the legal basis of food processing practices, packaging and labeling with GMP which food processors must comply with. Among these include the Republic Act 3720, also known as Food, Drugs and Devices, and Cosmetics Act, Republic Act 9711 or the Food and Drug Act of 2009, Republic Act 10611 or the Food Safety Act of 2013, and the Administrative Order 153 s. 2004 or the Revised Guidelines on Current Good Manufacturing Practice in Manufacturing Packaging, Repackaging, or Holding of Food.

To proceed with the goal to establish a community enterprise, the association plans to partner with the local government units and other regional line agencies to avail of facilities, such as processing and marketing center for their chicken meat products. Further, the DFO aims to participate in more advanced skills training on chicken meat processing and business management to capacitate its members towards its goal of becoming a supplier of quality dressed chickens, fried chickens, and other chicken meat products in the province, as well as to nearby provinces.

"Nan naitulong nan DA-SAAD project mi ay nay et nakatulong tapno makaala kamis new skills mi ya nakaala nan association si puonan ta maruguian nan enterprises mi. Wada et di tapin di ituloy mi as association ta dumakdake ta umalaan si lagbo," said Sarah Canggang, a member of DFO.

(Our project with the DA-SAAD Program helped us gain new skills and capital for the association to start an enterprise. With that, we would like the business to grow bigger using the additional income we acquired.) ###

Herding her future: SAAD farmer bought lot, built house from goat raising income

by James Brian R. Flaga

"Kaning lote ug payag, tungod sa kanding jud ni"
(The lot and this house, they're from the goats).

In Barangay Mahayahay, Maragusan, Narcisa Navales starts and ends her day herding goats. Mahayahay, a vegetable-producing barangay similar to the majority of Maragusan, is one of the farthest in the municipality at an elevation of more than 1,100 meters above sea level. The weather is temperate all year round, with downpours always expected on afternoons.

Together with her husband, Winnie, they till a two-hectare rolling land with vegetables, such as chayote, tomatoes, and Kentucky beans. The mother of three also moonlights as a utility worker for the barangay.

For two consecutive years, Ms. Navales was an individual beneficiary of the SAAD program's Upgraded Goat Production. She got two does in 2019 and a buck and a doe in 2020. The barangay's topography provided plenty of grazing area for the livestock, which she took advantage of and slowly increased the number in her herd. Soon after, she started selling does and bucks she deemed dispensable.

"Ibaligya nako ang mga inahan nga di kabalo mu-amoma sa iyang mga anak...ang nagapalit diri mga pulis. Muari man jud sila diri, usahay gusto ug buntis, ibaligya nako ug mas mahal. Basta laki nga dagkoon pud" (I sell does that don't know how to take care of their kids...the police [assigned] here are some of my buyers. They would seek me, sometimes they really want those does that are already pregnant, so I would sell at a higher price. I also sell robust bucks at a price), Ms. Navales related.

In Davao de Oro, liveweight selling prices of goats go at a minimum of Php 3,500 for a 15 kilograms (kg) doe.

"Katong nikabat ug unom akong mga inahan, tag-duha tulo akoang dal-on ibaligya" (When I reached 6 does, I would sell two or three), she said.

"Nakatabang jud sa amoa. Nangandoy mi diri nga makapalit unta mi ug lote" (It [SAAD's goat production project] helped. We started dreaming that we maybe could buy a lot).

That dream turned into a goal Ms. Navales worked to achieve. In hilly and mountainous areas like Mahayahay, farming lots are far-flung, usually, an hour or so hike. Getting a lot nearby the barangay's center is practical for her work and her children's schooling. Mahayahay is the topmost barangay in one of many mountainous parts of Maragusan and accessibility to basic living resources means...

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Herding her future: SAAD farmer bought lot, built house...from p. 7

a significantly improved quality of life when compared to living in a farm lot away from the community. It also decreases vulnerability to a potential brush with communist forces.

From 2020 up until writing, she has earned Php 95,500 from selling goats alone. She sold 18 goats in total, averaging a little more than Php 5,300 each. Two does from the lot fetched an impressive price of Php 10,000 each.

"Katong daghan na amoang kanding gipangbaligya, gi-downan na namo dayon ni nga lote" (When the number in the herd increased, we started regularly selling, and [from that] we put a downpayment to this lot), she declared.

"Gi-anamanam namo. Kaning lote ug payag, kanding jud ni" (We worked on it steadily. The lot and this house, they're from the goats).

The lot she and her husband bought was significantly closer to the barangay's center than the one they till, only a few meters away from the barangay hall. It has an overlooking view of the greater Maragusan below. The lot set them back Php 30,000.

"Duha ni ka-lotehan, dies por dies. Kwaan siya, 200 square meters guro" (The lot is divided into two 10 by 10, more or less 200 square meters in all).

On the lot, Ms. Navales started building a house, with the same income from selling goats.

Additionally, the money overarched to a downpayment for her son's motorcycle. The eldest, at 14, goes to school in neighboring barangay Parasanon.

Believing in the importance of imparting the value of hard work, she shared that a kid is assigned to each of her children. The motorcycle's downpayment, Php 6,500, was all of her son's income from the goat she entrusted him.

"Pagpanganak sa mga kanding, ginahatagan nako. Katong first nga gianak sa SAAD, na-down sa motor ang halin" (When the does bear kids, I give one to each of them. The first kids from [the goats] SAAD gave, the money was used as downpayment for the motorcycle), she said. Her eldest uses the motorcycle as primary transport vehicle for schooling.

"Kana imoha na, atimana na ug maayo. Tugway taga-buntag bago muadto ug eskwelahan" (That is yours [pertaining to the goat], take good care of it. You herd it in the morning before going to school).

SAAD's 11 Upgraded Goats Production Project

Upgraded Goat Production has been a mainstay livelihood project for SAAD RPMSO 11 since 2018. Based on a needs assessment, the project was identified as an intervention for Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas (GIDA) and End Local Communist Armed Conflict (ELCAC) areas because of the small ruminant's hardiness and liveweight selling potential. Upgraded goats are the offspring of a native breed and either an Anglo-Nubian or Boer pairing.

In 2019 and 2020, SAAD distributed upgraded goats in a 1:9 pairing ratio, at 8-10 months old, weighing at least 17kg to identified beneficiaries in Davao de Oro. The distributed goats were certified free of Caprine Arthritis Encephalitis (CAE) and Brucella by the Regional Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory's (RADDL) veterinarians before delivery. In case of death within seven days after distribution, the beneficiaries were also entitled to a replacement. The project benefitted 350 individual beneficiaries in 2019, then 5 groups and 289 farmers in 2020 across Davao de Oro.

Upgraded goats are hardy and pose better monetary rewards for individual beneficiaries within a year of distribution. Technically, a doe can be impregnated twice a year with one to two offspring each pregnancy.

"Kani, makapadungag jud sa ilahang panginabuhian. Gihatag nato sa ilaha tanan, naa tay training beforehand ug naa pud tay technical briefing sa distribution. Kita sa region nanghinaot nga ilaha jud ning mapa-lungtad" (This will add to their livelihood. We've provided them as much as we can, we had [goat] training beforehand and we also had technical briefing upon distribution. We hope that they can sustain it), Naomi Lamata, SAAD Region 11 Focal Person, said.

In 2021, SAAD 11 transitioned to giving farm implements from individual farmers to group beneficiaries. In Mahayahay, the group beneficiary identified was Malamboon Farmers Consumers Cooperative which received



abaca plantlets with a stripping machine from the program. Ms. Navales is a member of the FA, earning her access to the plantlets. Unfortunately, the ones she planted were eroded by a landslide. She's working to get monetary compensation for it through the Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation.

Implementation

Asked about her implementation, Ms. Navales related, *"Bisan asa na nga area namo ginatugway, basta lang musugot ang tag-ya. Kanang mga mani-manihan"* (We herd them everywhere provided the owner of the lot permits it, especially those with peanut grass).

"Tahod ug feeds. Ginapainom pud jud namo sila ug kanang asin, tubig matag hapon. Ginapurga taga-bulan" (Bran (chaff) and feeds. We let them drink water with salt every afternoon as well. Then, monthly purging), she added.

Just a few meters away from the house she built, there's a makeshift pen for her goats to rest in the evenings. Currently, Ms. Navales has three goats remaining, two of which, named Pine and Melda, are pregnant.

"Proud jud kaayo ko muingon nga tungod jud sa kanding, ug SAAD naa mi karon diri" (I'm so proud to say that because of the goats and SAAD, we are where we are now), she concluded.

Owning a house and lot is a universal experience most aspire to achieve. For farmers in GIDA and ELCAC area, a house and lot, however small and meager, may very well be the representation of a life's work to bring their family to safety. At its core, the SAAD Program works to provide additional income streams to these marginalized farmers. Ms. Navales, for all intents and purposes, is well on her way. ###

DEVELOPMENT

Biomass shredding machine received by SAAD farmers to mitigate cattle stunt growth

by Jolina T. Daño

NEGROS ORIENTAL, November 1, 2022 – The Department of Agriculture- Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD) Program provided five (5) units of biomass shredder to five (5) farmers associations (FAs) in Negros Oriental to mitigate livestock stunted weight growth.

The FAs are currently venturing into Integrated Cattle Fattening Production and Vermicomposting after their inclusion into the SAAD Program in 2021. The Cattle Fattening project was provided in 2021 and the Biomass shredding machines were awarded later this August of 2022 due to the necessity to provide alternative options to feed the stocks.

Beneficiaries financially struggle to buy commercial feeds for the cattle once they maxed out the supply feed from the SAAD, they grapple to maintain the appropriate diet of cattle mainly because of the cost of feeds, and instead, they rely on fresh forages.

In response, the shredder units were provided to the FAs to manufacture cheaper ruminant feeds for the cattle and aid to the poor weight growth of the cattle. Concurrently, the same machine will be utilized for the Vermicomposting process.

The inspection of the units was led by the Regional Agricultural Engineering Division (RAED), with the supplier and the association members, ensuring that the machines work properly.

Napier grass, coconut husks, madre de cacao leaves, and corn husks were loaded into the machine to test its main functions, as well as the throttle level and overall condition of the machine.

Beneficiaries rebound

Four (4) among the five (5) FAs sold their received interventions six (6) months into the project, for a cheap price due to the stunted weight condition of the cattle.

Beneficially, said FAs generated adequate profit to purchase a new batch of cattle for the initial

beneficiaries and even add new ones to the potential recipients.

The FAs garnered a total of Php 1.2M which they used to buy a new batch of stocks. Purchasing a total of 73 cattle, the FAs have enough animals to disperse to 59 beneficiaries and 14 additional beneficiaries.

Background

The five (5) FAs are all Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) registered, some were as early as 2009 and the latest was in 2015. Majority of the FA members are engaged in livestock raising and crop production such as rice, corn, vegetables, and cacao.

Meanwhile, the 59 select beneficiaries of the project were chosen based on the SAAD Program guidelines and selected from the lists provided by the local government units of each municipality. They were shortlisted, which entails LGU recommendations, and have not received any similar interventions from DA in the last two (2) years.

Beating soaring production cost organically

Aside from producing alternative ruminant feeds, FAs also venture into vermicomposting to maximize utilization of the shredders.

Vermicomposting is the process of cultivating a certain species of worm called African Nightcrawler (ANC). Vermicast is the end-product of the mentioned process. A dew of ANC breaks down organic output such as rotten fruits, leaves, etc., then later produces worm casting or humus that will eventually be mixed with the soil as an organic conditioner.

Cultivating ANC requires a substrate bed to grow, and practically the collected manure from the cattle fattening production is an option to be utilized.

Farmers have seen that if they employ vermicomposting on their crops, they can save on their farm operation costs by reducing buying commercial fertilizers such as Urea which costs around Php 2,550.00 per bag, and Complete costing around Php 2,200.00 per bag. In comparison, vermicast only costs Php



500.00 per bag, which tantamounts to over 80% difference in prices.

The project will also provide an additional income source for the five (5) FAs as the potential market value of vermicast ranges from Php 500.00 to Php 600.00 per 25 kilograms (kg) sack.

The groups are grateful with the interventions they received from the Program. Jovy A. Bongcawil, President of Talaon Forestland Farmers Association expressed her gratitude to the program. *"Nagpasalamat kog dako gikan sa ahensya sa DA pinaagi sa SAAD nga naghatag ug mga maayong programa ilabi na sa amoang asosasyon diri sa Talaon, sa suporta nga amoang nadawat, sa shredder nga makahatag ug dugang nga kaayohan alang sa amoang pag panguma. Dugang usab sa vermicomposting suporta kina sa abuno nga organik alang sa amoang mga tanom,"* she said.

(Thank you so much to the Department of Agriculture through the Special Area for Agricultural Development Program for providing our association here in Talaon with the support, and shredder that we can benefit from, and the vermicomposting project in which we can produce organic fertilizer for our crops.)

Collectively partaking into sustained livelihood

Members of each FA are currently constructing their shared shed for vermicomposting with a 32 m2 dimension and eight (8) inches tall pit. For starters, the FAs will put in 5kg of ANC which is expected to produce 105 bags of vermicast per year.

To sustain the project, the groups crafted an internal agreement where for every harvest, a 20% monetary share of the total income will be used for maintenance and operation.

All members (SAAD beneficiaries and non-SAAD beneficiaries) have a routine assignment, from collecting substrate (rice straw, cattle manure, corn residue, forage, and sawdust) to preparing food for the ANC, machinery maintenance, monitoring, harvesting, and marketing the product (vermicast).

Moreover, the income from the vermicast production will be used to fund the expansion of the shed and the daily needs of their members. ###





Agri-extension workers strengthen communication practices thru C4D Workshop

by Jennifer Valcobero and Jessa Mae Gabon

BAGUIO CITY, November 4, 2022 – To strengthen communication practices in defining and representing the realities of its beneficiaries, the regional and provincial information officers and area coordinators of the Department of Agriculture – Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD) Program participated in the Revisit and Magnify: Communication for Development (C4D) Workshop facilitated by the national team, from October 24 to 28.

A total of 40 participants gathered for an intensive discussion on the evolution of C4D as communication for rhetoric expression, persuasion, information dissemination, education, development, and social change, and how it is applied in all development sectors and themes across legacy and new media. These concepts were introduced by development communication experts from the University of the Philippines Open University (OPOU), Dr. Alexander Flor, Dr. Benjamina Flor, and Dr. Emely Amoloza.

Agriculture and its relation to C4D

Dr. Alexander Flor, a professor, scientist, and chair of the Doctor of Communication Program, in the UPOU Faculty of Information and Communication Studies (FICS), talked about how C4D

originated in the Philippines, its value in people's personal and professional lives, and its introduction as an academic discipline by Professor Nora Quebral, the mother of development communication.

Dedicated to the ultimate goal of SAAD which is to alleviate poverty in the marginalized sectors, agri-extension workers are encouraged to adopt C4D to promote development and its long-term results on food and nutrition security, sustainable agriculture, and rural community development.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations explained that C4D is a result-oriented communication process based on dialogue and participation. It can maximize the impact and sustainability of development initiatives, facilitating knowledge sharing, informed decision-making, and collective action.

This idea reflects SAAD's motivation and prompts the program to escalate its efforts in humanizing the stories of the beneficiaries, aside from addressing transparency in terms of financial and physical accomplishments, to create a meaningful impact in the communities it serves.

Dr. Flor reminded the learners and SAAD IOs to narrate the bigger picture – such as projects and practices that can be replicated, as communities and its members' realities on the ground vary.

Information officers in the national and regional support offices are considered frontliners in promoting the mission of the program. As communicators, linkers, and agents of change, ethical and

effective communication must be given careful thinking and consideration as they serve as voices of underrepresented sectors in agriculture and society.

Learning in a real-world setting

Keeping up with the topics thoroughly discussed by Dr. Alexander Flor, the participants were then deployed to conduct brief field observations of the community life in four identified areas in Baguio City. This is anchored in the essential nature of information, which makes up reality, and with which society can make sense through communication.

The activity is guided by the Science of Delivery (SOD) concept which explores the resolution in the emerging disruptions to fully realize a certain purpose that an institution serves. This usually does not lie in technical knowledge but in keeping the interest of the target audience to continue to participate in the project or initiative. In hindsight, SOD guides practitioners on what to communicate and the ways to deliver this message to the target audience. It also offers a systematic way of managing knowledge assets for better and targeted use.

A plenary was then opened to accommodate the presentation of observations, facilitated by Dr. Flor and Dr. Amoloza. This emphasized the difference between C4D from other communication disciplines. Said activity also helped the learners to use a critical lens in reading and narrating material issues that they encounter on the field, lived by the people that SAAD serves.

Societal issues or 'wicked problems' were raised in the brief activity that involves

problems in health, rampant and different forms of poverty, which branches to elderly labor, *kabataang kargador* or child labor, seen to have rooted from lack of opportunities, institutional support, education, and under- and unemployment, social conformity, importation, and cultural appropriation was also seen in the market area.

"All these things are beyond our control, but as writers, we can empower a larger community through the production of essential stories and hopefully reflect their practices and realities to other communities who have similar situations inspiring them to achieve or move towards their own development through information materials that we produce, this is called unintentional multiplying effect," said Dr. Flor.

Further, stories should not only feature who the farmers are, but what others can learn from them. While drafting, the data included should be vetted, validated, and clarified, for ethical community collaborations. Moreover, the audience of that particular news should also be considered on what medium will the story reach them, providing the beneficiaries a chance to talk about themselves, perpetuating local practices.

Dr. Benjamina Flor is appreciative of the program's efforts in documenting the impact of its agri-fishery livelihood projects. To reach a wider audience, she



recommended the officers be more innovative and resourceful in proving their stories. It could be done via multi-platforms such as social media, television, radio, comics, print, vlogging, tiktok (from the direct source) to hook the audience by delivering interesting news with additional context to inspire them to continue reading and listening.

Theories of Change, Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL)

Briefly, summative evaluation which usually happens at the end of the program was emphasized, as the roles that the communication officers play in this phase. With these basic but powerful leading questions, *'tumaas ba yung ani? tumaas ba yung kita?'* as a way of measuring the cost-effectiveness, efficiency (program management), sustainability, and impact of the program.

The speakers also encouraged the learners to perpetually study the program and get involved in different studies conducted for the reform or development of program management. More importantly, indicators and processes should be mapped, monitored, and evaluated, such as intermediate outputs (on food security and economic improvement), outcomes, and impacts for continuous fine-tuning of the program.

Strengthening SAAD's role in the holistic welfare of its beneficiaries

National Program Management Office (NPMO) Communications Head, Ms. Jessamae Gabon reiterated how the program's communication unit is a work in progress, striving to complement the functions of other units to fully serve its clients. In addition to the discussion of the C4D experts, she challenged the regional and provincial arms to take a dynamic approach to the stories and other materials, that in the end, lie ultimately in the initiatives of the IOs. Participants were also encouraged to start a campaign at the regional level, and newsletters that will be written in their local language.

Anchoring in the new ideas, perspectives, and ways to improve communication for development strategies and direction, SAAD is on its way to improving its approaches and guidelines for public relations and communication which will hopefully transpire in preparation for SAAD Phase 2 implementation.

A need to revise the existing communication guidelines of the program ushering in effective communication among implementers, stakeholders, policy-makers, partners, beneficiaries and the general public is one of its priority projects after the activity.

Finally, after the four-day intensive workshop, the NPMO also recognized the regions with the most number of published press releases (during the third quarter) awarding certificates of appreciation to MIMAROPA, Western Visayas, and Bicol for leading story contributions. ###

SAAD upgrades database management system for Phase 2

by DA SAAD Information Officers



GENERAL SANTOS CITY, November 29, 2022 – Transitioning to an improved database management system, the Department of Agriculture – Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD) Program Information Technology (IT) national and regional units underwent lectures to be equipped with relevant tools and partners in information management and a conducted holistic database assessment to conclude Phase 1 beneficiary profiles.

"Data is the new oil. This is the best asset today," shared Mr. Xerxees Remorozo, Information & Communications Technology Service (ICTS) Planning & Standard Division Chief who is a resource speaker during the 5th IT assessment and workshop facilitated by the SAAD National Program Management Office (NPMO) in General Santos City from November 22 to 24, 2022.

A valuable learning earned from SAAD Phase 1 is the importance of rudimentary information that will validate the credibility of SAAD operations. Said activity was led by the NPMO IT Unit Head Mr. Randy Ocampo, in partnership with the ICTS and the DA Registry System for Basic Sectors in Agriculture (RSBSA) NPMO.

More than 50 staff from different regions and provinces' SAAD IT units gathered and participated with the common objective to gain updated tools in information management in preparation for the Phase 2 of the implementation which will involve new sets of beneficiaries.

Registration and database workshop

In his opening remarks, SAAD Director Ulysses J. Lustria Jr. shared how the activity will benefit the Program. "We need to reform the SAAD's database management, especially profiling of beneficiaries. We cannot underestimate the value of IT to empower beneficiaries. We have to mainstream agricultural development through IT," shared Dir. Lustria.

Chief Remorozo kicked off the discussions by introducing the Information System Security Plan's (ISSP) purpose as a framework for the organizational efforts to computerize

operations. He also shared that ISSP is a tool of digital transformation toward food security.

Further, a lecture on RSBSA's importance as a basis for intervention and reference for program planning was discussed by Ms. Naomi Ann P. Rufino, RSBSA Development Management Officer III. The three (3) components of RSBSA, from profiling of farmers and fishers, georeferencing of farm parcels, and interventions monitoring system were also thoroughly discussed.

Crossmatching of data and possible inclusion of RSBSA enrollment form for all SAAD Phase 2 beneficiaries was also suggested during the dialogue. This is necessary since DA is working on the centralization of RSBSA as the main registry system for farmers and fisherfolks in the country as the agency pursues collaborations with other government units for data sharing and system arrangements.

Said topics were followed by the introduction of Farmers and Fisherfolk Registry System (FFRS) and its Application Programming Interface (API) facilitated by Ms. Darlene Abainza, RSBSA Information Technology Officer II.

FFRS is an online system used to facilitate the registration of farmers in support of the updating of the RSBSA. The website serves as the main storage of encoded farmer profiles. RSBSA development web servers, available dashboards for system users, management monitoring, report generation, detection of duplicates, and access points were also shown as best practices for data safekeeping and security.

According to IT Head Mr. Ocampo, the lectures, assessment, and workshop bank from the Phase 1 learnings to improve the security of the database and performance speed of the web server where information is stored. To avoid stalling information transmission, the whole team is moving toward changing the manner of data processing where regional IT officers will be more involved and hands-on – all for the improvement of profiling of the beneficiaries.

Where every unit of information makes up the digital reality of the program...*continue to p. 12*

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.

For comments and suggestions, please contact us via telephone number (02) 8929-7349 or via email address at saad@da.gov.ph.

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this is essential in the overall operation to ensure the count and eligibility of beneficiaries, and reflect the implementation of interventions that will be the basis of tracking the “development” – or processes of growth by collecting base information and expansion along the implementation.

Further, NPMO Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation (PME) Head, Mr. Darwin Pamatmat said the program database and IT unit is highly integrated into the planning and monitoring process in promoting efficiency of the core operations of SAAD.

According to Mr. Pamatmat, a good set of information emulates precision, which can be used to maximize the utilization of resources. Precise information leads to a smarter and just allocation, distribution, and monitoring of the projects.

Further, in the internal aspect, information management is seen to foster accountability among involved parties, and externally, promotes transparency, seeing where resources are going such as the budget, livelihood projects, capacity building, and other support to the farmers and fishers, as well as determining and improving its appropriations.

SAAD IT assessment

As of 2022, the whole of SAAD IT profiling has an 87.25% completion rate for individuals and 87.64% for groups. These figures involve profiles of SAAD beneficiaries from 2017 up to the present, where 122,744 individual profiles and 2,490 group profiles for the 30 priority provinces of the program are stored and managed.

Leading regions with the most uploads and completion of profiled data from 2017 to 2022 were also recognized. Leading is Caraga with 100%; followed by MIMAROPA with 99.61%; and Region 8 with 99.29% completion rate.

Database uploading issues and concerns revolving on duplicate projects and entries for deletion, inability to upload beneficiary profiles during system downtime, and backlogs from previous years due to incomplete data were discussed during the forum.

Additionally, a hands-on step by step guide on profile uploading to the new database facilitated by NPMO IT Unit head Mr. Ocampo was introduced. The IT unit team then helped out each regional and provincial unit through a focus group discussion (FGD) aimed at collating errors experienced by each group.

Ways forward

Anchoring on the discussions from the previous days, the team agreed on reviewing guidelines on ISSP equipment and supplies procurement process; crafting a memorandum on the request for provision of data center storage in 2023 for SAAD, subject to legal clearance of RSBSA; inclusion of RSBSA form on the Phase 2 implementation; completion of previous and current years' profile uploading backlogs by the end of 2022.

DA Region 12 Officer in Charge (OIC) – Regional Technical Director (RTD) Mr. Zaldy M. Boloron closed the program by emphasizing how database management will improve the agriculture sector towards economic growth.

“Database management is an approach to digital agriculture. This is a paradigm shift of our administration. How can we increase production? Database is the answer. This training is very important to expand our agricultural production and processing,” RTD Boloron shared. ###

