

## Official Internal Newsletter of the Department of Agriculture



"Halos dalawang taon na mula nang ako'y manungkulan bilang Agriculture Secretary—isang hamon na lubos na nagbago sa aking pananaw sa sektor ng pagsasaka at sa Kagawaran. Hindi naging madali ang simula. Puwede natin sabihing I had my baptism of fire and water—may El Niño na at La Niña pa.

Pero sanay naman tayong humarap sa pagsubok sa buhay. Dahil kapag nalampasan natin ang mga hirap sa simula, siguradong mas magaan ang pagpapatupad ng mga reporma.

Tinatawag ko ang 2024 na isang "perfect storm"—na gaya nang nabanggit nila dati, sunod-sunod ang hagupit sa agrikultura—tagtuyot, pagputok ng bulkan, at mga bagyong sinabayan pa ng La Niña. Dagdag pa ang paglabas muli ng African Swine Fever dahil sa ulan at baha at mga sakit sa halaman.

Ngunit sa kabila ng mga ito, hindi tayo sumuko. Sa halip, bawat hamon ay ginagamit nating inspirasyon para magsikap at magpatuloy ngayon. Makikita natin ang mga bunga: ang mas maliwanag na daan at mas maayos na pamamaraan."

Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel Jr. reported the Department's achievements for the first half of 2025 during a flag raising ceremony on July 7, 2025

## BIDA Moments

### 2025 National Disaster Resilience Month



The Department of Agriculture (DA) joins the nation in observing the National Disaster Resilience Month with the theme: "Kumikilos para sa Kahandaan, Kaligtasan, at Katatagan."

Pursuant to Executive Order No. 29, signed on July 28, 2017, NDRM is celebrated every July in the Philippines to underscore the shift from disaster awareness to disaster resilience.

## DA WHO?

(get to know your DA family)

## Leading the agricultural development for the poor:

### Director Ulysses J. Lustria Jr.

Director Ulysses J. Lustria Jr. dedicated nearly four decades of his life to the Department of Agriculture (DA), championing rural development through impactful and inclusive agricultural programs and policies.

Over time, he emerged as a key figure in crafting initiatives that continue to empower and uplift marginalized communities. He earned his degree in Communication Arts (Major in Writing) from the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) and holds master's degrees in Development Management and Development Economics.

His professional credentials were a testament to his competence and commitment to public service: Civil Service Professional, Certified Agriculturist, Licensed Environmental Planner, and Career Executive Service Eligible (CESE).

He began his career as an Agricultural Specialist and Economic Researcher at the Special Concerns Office (SCO) in 1988. Throughout his service, he rose through the ranks and became Chief of the Planning and Programming Division, where he helped develop the foundations of the Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) Program.

"In project development, I contributed to the preparation of several foreign-assisted projects that were eventually funded and implemented. As planning director, I think my biggest achievement is reaching this position," Dir. Lustria said.

In 2016, he joined SAAD full-time and was appointed as National Program Director in 2022. Since then, he has been steering the program with steadfast dedication and a clear vision to uplift marginalized farmers and fisherfolk throughout the country.

Dir. Lustria was deeply admired for his calm, composed nature, especially amid demanding responsibilities. He led not with words but through quiet action—often working beyond regular hours and even on holidays to fulfill his responsibilities.

"Kahit holiday, nagtatrabaho pa rin ako online. Basta unahin ang importante. Kailangan lang ng work-life balance," he added.

His leadership was anchored on the principle: "You have to be technically competent, and competent as well in management." | KJMerle

In line with this, the DA-Field Operations Service (FOS), through its Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Section (DRRMS) has lined up its series of activities for the month.

17-18  
JULY 2025

NDRM Culminating Activity

21-22  
JULY 2025

Standard First Aid Training for DA-Central Office employees (in collaboration with DA-HRDD)

21-25  
JULY 2025

GIS and Canva Workshop

WHOLE MONTH  
JULY 2025

Series of Online Postings – DA initiatives, activities, success stories, and DRR-related facts and information





# Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) Fulfilling a Promise: Uplifting communities through agriculture



The Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) is a government-led program launched in 2016 to help reduce poverty and boost agricultural productivity by providing livelihood support to marginalized Filipino farmers and fishers.

The word “saad” in Visayan means “promise,” reflecting the program’s pledge to uplift underprivileged rural communities through opportunities in agriculture and fisheries.

Initially, the program focused on the 10 poorest provinces each year, based on poverty data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (2012 and 2015). In 2019, areas affected by conflict were added under Executive Order 70, which established the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC).

SAAD is implemented in two phases: Phase 1 (2017–2022) and Phase 2 (2023–2028). Phase 1 aimed to address hunger and poverty by offering livelihood projects, agricultural inputs, and training. Its success was primarily measured through improvements in household food consumption and increased income. Despite funding constraints, the program established effective systems and policies.

SAAD Phase 1 supported 440 municipalities and 27 cities across 11 regions, delivering 3,602 projects that benefited 143,520 individuals, 6,319 farmers and fishers’ cooperatives and associations (FCAs), and 179,088 FCA members.

Building on this foundation, Phase 2 is broadening its coverage and adopting improved policies and data-driven strategies to better address the needs of the agriculture sector. It targets to support 619 municipalities in 56 provinces classified as fifth to sixth income class and among the most marginalized (excluding BARM).

The current phase focuses on social preparation, livelihood support, enterprise development, and efficient program delivery, aiming to transform beneficiaries into agri-entrepreneurs.

With Director Ulysses J. Lustria Jr.’s expertise and dedication, the SAAD Program continues its strong commitment to empowering rural communities—helping farmers and fishers evolve from basic producers into thriving agri-entrepreneurs while contributing to food security and inclusive economic growth. | KJMerle

## BIDA Question of the Week

Tuwing Hulyo, ating ipinagdiriwang ang Buwan ng Nutrisyon bilang paalala sa kahalagahan ng wastong pagkain sa ating kalusugan at kinabukasan. Sa pamamagitan nito, hinihikayat tayong maging mas mapanuri at matalino sa pagpili ng ating kinakain lalo na’t malaki ang epekto nito sa ating araw-araw na pamumuhay.

Kaugnay nito, tinanong natin ang ating mga Ka-BiDA:

### Ano ang laman ng plato/pinggang Pinoy mo?

“Best platong Pinoy ko will be 1 cup of rice, 2 garlic longganisa, 1 fried egg, ensaladang talong or laing, tapos may tropical fruits sa side. Complete full meal!”

**Joshua Robosa**  
Administrative Officer V  
DA-Policy Research Service-Trade Remedies Office



“Sa pinggang Pinoy ko, bida ang organikong black rice na kasama ang inihaw na manok o ginisang baka, itlog, at mga gulay na mataas sa fiber tulad ng kangkong at talbos ng kamote. Pinipili ko ang organic hindi lang para sa kalusugan ko, kundi para na rin sa kalikasan. Masarap, makakalikasan, at masigla!”

**Pamela Reyes**  
Development Management Officer II  
DA-National Organic Agriculture Program (NOAP)



“Ang pinggang Pinoy ko ay luto ni misis — may ginisang monggo na may ampalaya at malunggay, mainit na kanin, at pritong galunggong. Ensaladang kamatis na may calamansi at sibuyas ang side dish. Tubig pa rin ang panalong inumin! Paborito ko ito kasi masarap na, healthy pa. Ito ang pagkain na hindi lang busog sa tiyan kundi puno rin ng alaala. Tinutukan ko ang tamang bahagi at kombinasyon ng pagkain para maging BiDA sa kalusugan!”

**Leonel “Sky” Limbauan**  
Senior Administrative Assistant III  
Office of the Undersecretary for High-Value Crops



## Announcement

Ikaw na ang susunod na  
**BiDang Makata!**

Kung ikaw ay kawani ng DA Central Office at handang-handa nang magpamalas ng iyong talento sa pagsulat ng tula, ito na ang pagkakataon mong bumida ngayong Buwan ng Wikang Filipino!

Ipasa ang iyong likhang tula ukol sa anumang paksa sa [afid@mail.da.gov.ph](mailto:afid@mail.da.gov.ph) hanggang Agosto 1, 2025 (3:00 n.h.).

Para sa karagdagang impormasyon, tumawag sa local 2149 / 2155 / 2156.

## Sali na!

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY

<p><b>July 7</b> Joseph B. Baldelomar Fernando B. Cruzat Ferdinand S. Cagaoan</p>	<p><b>July 10</b> Monina Marie G. Cheng Annwin L. Alban Leonel L. Limbauan Yvon Krystelle B. Agraan</p>	<p><b>July 14</b> Syed Kamal Reza L. Ampatuan</p>
<p><b>July 9</b> Allan Robert U. Monserrat Charmine E. Bongalos Roderick John B. Dimayuga</p>	<p><b>July 12</b> Marichel A. Verganio Constantino C. Acosta, Jr. Elijah James E. Cal Ortiz Asec. James A. Layug</p>	

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