



Aggie Trends



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'Boodle Fight'. Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap (right) shares lunch, kamayan style, with farmers, fishermen, livestock raisers, agri-entrepreneurs and the private sector, as part of the culminating activities of the 2009 Farmers' and Fisherfolk's Month celebration, at the DA-Bureau of Soils and Water Management, in Quezon City.

DA unveils 'virtual techno, market link,' Pinoy agri kart

Joined by the country's leading agribusiness entrepreneurs, Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap launched on May 29, 2009 two major initiatives that aim to provide technical and marketing assistance to farmers, fishers, other clientele and stakeholders, and link them directly with technical experts or prospective buyers and clients, in real time, anywhere in the Philippines.

The first is known as the 'Virtual Techno and Market Link,' while the second is the 'Pinoy Agri Kart.'

For the first project, Secretary Yap and a group of agribusinessmen, led by Philippine Food Exporters (Philfoodex)

Association president Roberto Amores, had a teleconference from the DA-BSWM convention hall in Quezon City with fruit farmers and fish processors in Davao and Toril cities in Mindanao.

(Pls turn to p11)

Saudis eye \$300M agri investments

A 26-man agricultural trade and investment mission from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, led by their Agriculture Minister Dr. Fahad A. Balghunaim, has committed to invest an initial \$300 million in the country's farm sector.

They expressed keen interest in the propagation of corn, basmati rice, alfalfa, bananas, pineapples, and mariculture projects, said Marriz Agbon, president of the Department of Agriculture's Philippine Agricultural Development and Commer-

(Pls turn to p11)

Police has sketch of Dir. Lasam's killers

Story on page 2

2009 Q1 Performance

Agri grows by 2%

The Philippine agriculture sector posted a modest growth of 2.02 percent (%) during the first three months of 2009, with all the four sub-sectors--crops, livestock, poultry and fisheries--registering positive gains.

The total agricultural output is estimated at P309.3 billion at current prices, 10.4% more than last year's level.

In a report to Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap, Director Romeo Recide of the DA-Bureau of Agricultural Statistics (DA-BAS) said for the crops sub-sector, palay (unmilled rice) production increased by 5.13% to 3.94 million metric tons (MT), while corn harvest totaled 1.93 million MT, 3.4% lower than last year's level.

The significant palay harvest came from five regions--Bicol, Central Luzon, Cagayan Valley, SOCCSKSARGEN, and Ilocos--where harvest areas have expanded due to sufficiency of wa-

ter from repaired national irrigation systems and shallow tubewells, and availability of certified and hybrid seeds through the DA regional field units, Philippine Rice Research Institute, and private seed companies.

The poultry sub-sector expanded by 4.08%, while the livestock subsector made a turn-

(Pls turn to p2)

Corn price support is now P13 per kilo

Farmers are happier these days, as the price support for yellow corn has been raised to P13 per kilo, from P11.50.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap said government through the Department of Agriculture's National Food Authority (DA-NFA) will buy as much as 300,000 metric tons (MT) of yellow corn, starting in the main harvest season in August.

(Pls turn to p11)



Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap (right) proudly shows to Dr. Fahad A. Balghunaim (2nd from right), agriculture minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), and members of the KSA agricultural trade and investment mission, a fresh catch of milkfish (bangus) from the 60-hectare mariculture park (MP), in Panabo City, Davao.

Editorial

Once again, cheers to our countryside heroes

This month, we are once again paying tribute to our timeless, hardworking heroes in the countryside, the farmers and fishers, who continuously toil to feed the nation. Their contribution to our economy, therefore, cannot be understated.

But what makes them truly commendable is that they continue to do their daily chores well, despite being subjected to the vagaries of the weather, threats of pests and diseases, lack of infrastructure, and inadequate financial, technical and marketing assistance.

Acknowledging that access to technical support and market linkages is the most pressing dilemma faced by farmers and fisherfolk, Secretary Arthur C. Yap made it an opportune venue -- the Farmer's and Fisherfolk Culminating Ceremony on May 29 -- to unveil two novel initiatives: 'Virtual Techno and Market Link' and the Pinoy Agri Kart.

The Virtual Techno & Market Link is billed as the embodiment of a modern DA, delivering technical and market assistance on real time, anywhere in the archipelago, via the Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP).

A work in progress, the project will be rolled out at DA regional offices and units, and major Bagsakan Centers that will reduce the costs of travel, communication, and marketing -- which in turn would translate to savings for other worthy DA initiatives. Plans are also under-

way with the project's e-payment component with partner banks.

On the other hand, the Pinoy Agri Kart, designed a jeepney, will promote agri-fishery exports at the country's major international and domestic airports and seaports, trade fairs and other venues. It will be also offered as a livelihood enterprise for overseas Filipino workers and retirees, through an affordable social franchising scheme.

In coming up with these projects, Secretary Yap stressed that the crucial chain between production and consumption must be shortened and made stronger to buttress greater opportunity and more incomes for smallholders, and thus hasten the country's journey from subsistence farming to competitive and sustainable agriculture.

It means a food supply chain that is fully integrated -- from the farms to the processing facilities, onto domestic and global markets -- providing food producers assured and direct markets for their harvests, and consumers with more affordable and sufficient volumes of food.

We therefore hope that all agri-fishery stakeholders will fully embrace and support these initiatives and other efforts, as we all work toward surmounting the huge challenge of increasing the incomes of small farmers and fishers, and providing adequate, affordable, nutritious food for our countrymen.

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Sketch out for Dir. Lasam's killers

TUGUEGARAO, Cagayan -- Task Force Lasam operatives yesterday expressed confidence of arresting soon the suspects in the ambush of a government executive following the release of the physical sketch of one of the gunmen in the said killing last April 14.

Chief Supt. Roberto Damian, Cagayan Valley police director, said that they have already an artist sketch of the suspects in the killing of Department of Agriculture Cagayan Valley Director Gumersindo Lasam, who was shot dead on board his vehicle while on his way to his farm in Barangay Basi West, Solano town here.

In the computer-generated sketch, Damian described the 25- to 28-year-old suspect as medium built with dark complexion, 5'5" to 5'6" in height and weighing 60 to 70 kg.

According to witnesses,

Damian said, the suspect, one of Lasam's two assailants on board a motorcycle, was wearing a blue t-shirt and dark short pants when they shot dead the 63-year-old Lasam.

Meanwhile, Damian said that at least five angles are being looked into as possible motive behind the killing.

This, he said, includes job or personal-related, business and politics. Investigators, he said, they are also considering the P780-million fertilizer fund scam as possible motive in Lasam's slay.

"We are considering all possible motives in the incident. But right know, we can't pinpoint any suspects or possible brains behind the killing. We are doing everything for the early solution of this case," Damian said. (By **Francisco C. Hidalgo Jr.**; source: <http://memorialwebsites.legacy.com/gomer/MemorialSite.aspx>)

Agri grows... (from p1)

around, posting a 2.37% growth.

Finally, the fisheries sub-sector grew by 3.49%, due to the strong 4.8% yield of municipal fisheries.

Besides palay, the other big output gainers in the crops sub-sector were cassava (5%), banana (5%), tomato (3.4%), pineapple (3.6%), and tobacco (3.4%).

In terms of value at current prices, the crops sub-sector led with P172.7 billion, roughly 55.8% of total output; followed by fisheries, P53.3B (17.3%); livestock, P46.7 B (15.1%); and poultry, P36.6B (11.8%).

Farmgate prices increased by an average of 8.25 percent during the first quarter.

The crops subsector registered an average price increase of 10.34 percent.

Palay price continued to post double digit growth and this year, it was 20.16 percent higher than last year's level. This was attributed to stiff competition and higher buying prices of traders.

Corn price was up by 25.19 percent as a result of sustained demand for white corn from the 'cornick' industry and as substitute for rice. There was also higher demand for yellow corn from feed millers.

Meanwhile, the DA-BAS said palay production for the first se-

mester of 2009 may reach 7.37 million MT, 3.6% higher than the 7.12 million MT harvest in 2008. Harvest area may expand by 3.7%, from 1.88 to 1.95 million hectares.

The July-September 2009 palay output is forecast at 3.55 million MT, 2.4% above last year's 3.47 million MT. Harvest area may increase by 2.1% or from 954,000 hectares to 974,000 hectares.

Corn production is expected to be lower than last year's record due to the adverse effects of continuous and/or excessive rains, strong winds and cold spell. The occurrence of corn planthoppers was likewise noted.

On the other hand, the January-June 2009 corn production is expected to decrease by 2.5%, from 3.29 million MT last year to 3.21 million MT this year. Harvest area and yield may decrease by 0.5% and 2%, respectively.

The July-September 2009 corn output is expected to increase by 2.3%, from 2.26 million MT last year to 2.31 million MT this year. Harvest area may contract by 0.1%.

The DA-BAS said the April-June and July-September 2009 forecasts were the results of the April 2009 Palay and Corn Production Survey (PCPS) conducted nationwide.

DA allots P25M to fix fish cages in Pangasinan

Agriculture Sec. Arthur Yap has allocated P25 million to help fishermen fix their fish cages damaged by typhoon *Emong* in the municipalities of Bolinao and Anda, in Pangasinan.

Together with BFAR director Malcolm I. Sarmiento, Jr., Sec. Yap just came from Manado, Indonesia, after attending the World Ocean Sea Conference and the Coral Triangle Initiative Summit, which was also graced by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

While in Bolinao, he met with fish cage owners and local officials and discussed with them the DA's rehabilitation plan.

The local officials were led by Pangasinan Governor Amado Espino, Bolinao Mayor Alfonso Celeste, and Vice Mayor Elias Quisay.

"We need to act fast in rehabilitating the fish cages in these areas. Growing bangus to market-



Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap (2nd from right) discusses the rehabilitation of typhoon-damaged fish cages with owners and local officials of bolinao led by Mayor Alfonso Celeste. Sec. Yap is flanked by Dir. malcolm Sarmiento of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, DA-BFAR Regional Director Nestor Domenden and DA-Reg. I Director Cipriano Santiago.

able size requires at least 6 to 7 months and this would mean shortage and hike in fish prices in Metro Manila," Yap said.

Yap stressed the need to ad-

dress the issues of food security and the livelihood of the affected fisherfolk as well as the importance of restoring the supply lines of bangus to Metro Manila mar-

kets.

Bolinao and Anda, and nearby areas supply a total of 120 MT of bangus to Metro Manila. Because of the typhoon damage, the supply was cut to only 40 tons.

To compensate for the 80-ton shortfall, the DA and the BFAR have requested the commercial fishermen to increase their unloadings of *galunggong* and *tamban* at the Navotas Fish Port.

Five big commercial fish operators have immediately responded, which include Frabelle, RBL, Irma, TransWorld Journey, Mega Fishing and Jimmy Yap of Zamboanga City.

For bangus supply, the Laguna de Bay operators have also agreed to increase their daily harvest by 30 tons.

Yap also instructed the National Food Authority to increase the supply of NFA rice at P18.25 per kilo to the barangays affected by the typhoon.

He instructed the DA-BFAR Ilocos Region to coordinate with concerned LGUs to formulate the guidelines in identifying the fisherfolk-beneficiaries under a selection criteria, as well as identifying the most appropriate assistance to be given.

The fish operators in the provinces of Pangasinan and La Union incurred losses estimated around P500M or 6,000 tons due to the damage brought by typhoon *Emong*. The loss is equivalent to 3.7% of the regional annual fish production, according to DA-BFAR Region 1 director Nestor Domenden. (BFAR)

60,000 farmers, agri workers benefit from info caravans

Close to 60,000 farmers and agri technicians nationwide have benefited from the 39 information caravans organized by the Department of Agriculture through the Agricultural Training Institute (DA-ATI) since mid-2008, covering 15 regions.

In a report to Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap, ATI Director Asterio Saliot said 59,265 farmers, agricultural extension workers and other agriculture stakeholders benefited from the info caravans, dubbed as "Teknokliniks," that focused on the government's FIELDS program, President Arroyo's centerpiece agriculture agenda to attain food security and rice self-sufficiency by 2013.

FIELDS stands for Fertilizer, Irrigation and other rural infrastructure, Education and Extension Work, Loans, Dryers and other postharvest facilities, and Seeds.

Saliot said the info caravans are part of the Education and Extension component of FIELDS.

He said the major concerns discussed in the caravans include: fertilizer price and subsidy; rehabilitation/construction of new irrigation systems; extension pro-

grams reaching the farmer level; loan types/application process/crop insurance; maintenance/operating costs of dryers; and seed quality control.

During the caravan, the participants were given FIELDS briefing manual and other advocacy materials.

Further, Saliot said the ATI as of December 2008 had trained 235 agricultural technicians on modern rice technologies, organic fertilizer manufacturing, vegetable production, and other environment-friendly farming practices. They will then train over

The agricultural technicians, will, in turn, train 500,000 farmers nationwide by the end of the 2009 wet season.

Saliot reported that the latest batches of trainors come from the provinces of Cagayan, Rizal, Albay, Sorsogon, Iloilo, Lanao del Norte, North Cotabato, and Basilan.

The ATI is targeting to train 4,320 technicians until July 2009.

Saliot said the remaining 4,320 trainees make up the bulk of the 6,120 agricultural technicians covered by the FIELDS program to help train over 500,000 farm-

Integration of corn, feed, livestock, poultry industries in the offing

The Department of Agriculture is pushing for the integration of the corn, feed, livestock and poultry subsectors as part of its total systems approach to ensuring sustained development and global competitiveness.

Agriculture Assistant Secretary Salvador Salacup said the DA will encourage more feed milling and hog- and chicken-growing ventures in corn-producing areas; and, inversely, corn-planting activities around hog and chicken areas to to achieve said integration.

“Secretary Arthur Yap and the DA livestock agencies--Bureau of Animal Industry, Livestock Development Council, National Meat Inspection Service, National Dairy Authority and Philippine Carabao Center--are determined to reinforce the sector, and guarantee the future progress of the Filipino hog industry,” Salacup said during a recent hog convention and trade exhibit.

Yap has also rolled out several imperatives to help the hog industry hurdle the current woes it is now facing, such as the high cost and unstable supply of feeds; the prevalence of diseases; high marketing costs; calamities and in-

tractable weather conditions. These are:

1. Improving the quality of animals through the unified animal insemination and breeder farm accreditation programs, which will entail the repair and restoration of six mini-liquid nitrogen plants in Central Luzon, Central Visayas, Northern Mindanao and Davao Region to enhance artificial insemination services of its local government partners for small and large ruminants;
2. Carrying on with the promotion of food safety and modernization by encouraging good agricultural and manufacturing practices;
3. Bringing science into the supply chain by increasing research activities into bio-security, animal health, post-production, and in the

marketing and distribution of livestock and poultry products;

4. Continuing to carry out interventions to bolster the country’s bid to secure certification from the Office International des Epizooties declaring Luzon as FMD-free, and in effect, the entire Philippines;
5. Expanding prevention and control measures against the Ebola Reston virus (ERV);
6. Stepping up efforts to eradicate the Newcastle disease and hog cholera, and continuing to distribute vaccines and medicines to livestock raisers and LGUs on a regular basis; and
7. Addressing the high cost of inputs by vigorously pursuing and implementing the Ginintuang Masaganang Ani Corn Program.

Irrigation projects to create 123,000 jobs

As the Arroyo administration restores and rehabilitates irrigation facilities nationwide, it will also generate nearly 123,000 jobs, as part of the Comprehensive Livelihood and Emergency Employment Program (CLEEP).

In a report to Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap, Administrator Carlos Salazar of the DA-National Irrigation Administration (NIA) said the rehabilitation of irrigation facilities this year will cover 68,000 hectares of land, while the restoration phase will service an additional 133,000 hectares.

Rehabilitation involves minor repairs of canals and the suste-

nance of irrigation areas while restoration entails the repair of canal structures, diversion works and excavations to make nonfunctional irrigated areas serviceable.

Salazar said the projects would benefit mostly Mindanao and the North Luzon Agribusiness Quadrangle.

“The irrigation projects are estimated to cost P8 billion, and will directly benefit 88,700 farmers.

Meanwhile, various CLEEP projects in Northern Luzon and Bohol have benefited 9,400 farmers and ruralfolk.

On top of the jobs generated by the DA, Yap said various Departments have also come up with their respective employment projects, such as the Cash-for-Work and Food-for-Work programs of the Department of Social Welfare and Development, Out-of-School Youths Servicing Towards Economic Recovery (OYSTER) project of the Department of the Interior and Local Government, and the KANAN Program of the Department of Public Works and Highways.

In Bohol, Yap said that loans totalling P2.82 million were provided by the Department of Agrarian Reform to farmers through the Bantolinao Farmers Multipurpose Cooperative.

NFA assures stable rice supply

The DA’s National Food Authority (NFA) assures the public that it has enough rice inventory--through rice imports and intensive local procurement of summer palay harvest--to stabilize and deter any unwarranted price increases.

Currently, the NFA has 22 million bags, good for one month based on the country’s daily requirement of 35, 000 metric tons and five months ‘rice supply based on the agency’s daily rice sales.

“We can infuse rice wherever and whenever necessary just to make sure the ordinary consumer will have access to good quality, affordable rice,” said NFA administrator Jessup Navarro.

Navarro said that an increase in the price of commercial rice at this time is a normal market reaction at the end of harvest, aggravated by the damage wrought by two typhoons, *Dante* and *Emong*.

“With the summer harvest now ending, traders are competing and paying more for whatever supply is left, thereby pushing up palay and rice prices.

NFA’s commercial grade rice remains at P25 per kilogram. NFA is also selling high-end varieties at P28 per kilo (15% brokens) and P32 per kilo (5% brokens).

Meanwhile, the P18.25 per kg rice is still available at Tindahan Natin outlets and sold exclusively to the families with Family Access Card issued by the Department of Social Welfare and Development or included in the Rice Allocation Ledger in the provinces.

The DA has also provided jobs to Boholanons through various projects like repair and rehabilitation of irrigation systems, construction of farm-to-market roads, Gulayan ng Masa, goat and swine dispersal, and Bantay Dagat.

The DA is undertaking infrastructure projects that include Loay and Dimiao fishports, and Malijao Irrigation and Tangohay Dam Rehabilitation Project and farm-to-market roads.



Agno River Irrigation Project. Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap (3rd from left) and Trade Secretary Peter Favilla (2nd from left) witness the exchange of Memorandum of Agreement between DA-National Irrigation Authority Administrator Carlos Salazar (left) and Chairperson Luo Yan of CAMCE Engineering Co. Ltd., at the contract signing of the P11.2-Billion Agno River Integrated Irrigation Project. When completed, it will rehabilitate and irrigate 32,450 hectares of farm

For harvesting a record 345 cavans (17.25 tons) per hectare, 69-year old Severino G. Payumo of Barangay Buliran, Cabanatuan City, is this year's most outstanding hybrid rice farmer of Nueva Ecija, and for that matter of the entire country.

He attained the yield during the just concluded 2008-09 dry season. His feat was officially confirmed by a panel of judges from the DA's Philippine Rice Research Institute, DA-Regional Field Unit 3, Central Luzon State University, Nueva Ecija Provincial Agriculture Office, Cabanatuan City Agriculture Office, and representatives of a hybrid rice company (SL Agritech).

In a way, his accomplishment disproves the misreported proliferation of "bansot" or stunted hybrid rice plants early this year in the province.

To recall, the controversy started when a hybrid rice variety (SL8) exhibited stunted growth, and initiated flowering, causing panic among farmers.

They then plowed the *bansot* plants under the soil and replanted. And it was a wrong, hasty decision, experts said.

As a result, they were left behind by those who stuck it out. In fact, Payumo said there was no reason to panic, saying: "Even a ten percent anomaly is tolerable."

Here's how he got his record-breaking harvest of 345 cavans.

Two months before the start of the second cropping, he applied 50 bags of fresh chicken manure to his one-hectare farm that he

Cabanatuan farmer harvests all-time high 345 cavans

By Pete Samonte



Severino Payumo (right & inset) at his farm in Bgy. Buliran, Cabanatuan City, with agriculture technician El Supan.

entered in the 'outstanding hybrid rice contest.'

He then allowed the fresh manure to dry under the sun.

As soon as irrigation water started to flow, he undertook primary tillage operation with a rotavator from a hired 4-wheel tractor.

He believes that a thoroughly prepared and leveled field solves half of future operations involved in rice culture.

He also maintains and uses the right equipment such as a hand tractor, a carabao, harrow,

spades, and leveler, among others.

"With proper leveling of the rice paddies, you can control the height of irrigation water, control weeds, and even control golden snails," he said.

After a month from initial tillage, he applied two bags of triple 14 and a bag of 16-20-0 as basal application. He then planted 21-day old SL8 seedlings to give ample time for tillering during the vegetative phase of the rice plant.

Twelve days after transplanting, he applied two bags of triple 14

and a bag of 46-0-0 or urea. After 21 days, he applied another two bags of urea, two bags of 14-14-14 and one bag of 16-20-0.

During the early reproductive stage, he applied a bag of 17-0-17. In all, he used 12 bags of fertilizers.

During the early flowering stage, he applied a foliar fertilizer.

He said the first 35 days after transplanting is the most crucial period for successful and profitable rice farming. This is the time when the plants need complete care and attention, especially against harmful pests and insects.

He is likewise meticulous during transplanting, particularly the recommended distance between seedlings, at 18 x 18 cm. during the dry season and 20 x 20 cm. during the wet season.

Payumo credits his record harvest to the mixture of his experience and the latest rice technology from the DA and PhilRice.

Thus, whenever there is an invitation for a seminar or training for rice technology, he is the first to volunteer.

In fact, he was previously into producing registered rice seeds. He abandoned it when he was convinced that growing hybrid rice is more profitable.

He did not regret it.

And most of his fellow farmers in Barangay Buliran, of which he is also the Barangay Chairman, are now into hybrid rice, harvesting an average of 180 to 200 cavans per hectare. Other Nueva Ecija farmers harvest as much as 280 cavans.

Bruneians' RP visit a success

Six agriculture officials from Brunei Darussalam, led by their Minister of Industry and Primary Resources Pehin Dato Yahya, had a successful three-day visit at the Philippine Rice Research Institute, in Munoz, Nueva Ecija, early this month.

They observed the latest rice production technologies and farm machinery, including PhilRice's facilities and experimental fields.

"We are banking on PhilRice's experience and technologies to help increase our rice production," Minister Yahya.

Currently, Brunei's rice production can only feed 3 of its 100 residents. Thus, 97% of its rice requirement is imported.

The delegation also visited rice

farming communities and irrigation facilities in Nueva Ecija, particularly the Pantabangan Hydro-power and Irrigation System, the nearby Central Luzon State University, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources aquaculture center, and the Philippine Carabao Center.

Their visit puts into action the memorandum of understanding (MOU) on agricultural cooperation recently signed by Minister Yahya and Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap.

The MOU aims to strengthen ties of the two countries in agriculture-related trade and investments, such as production and postharvest technology on rice, vegetable, fruit crops, and live-

stock.

PhilRice Executive Director Ronilo A. Beronio said the MOU breathes life into the offer of President Arroyo to Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah of Brunei of helping increase the Sultanate's rice production in the latter's January 2009 state visit to the Philippines.

Several PhilRice experts are currently in Brunei, maintaining a six-hectare techno-demo farm, which is due for harvest in mid-July, said Beronio.



PhilRice Dir. Ronilo Beronio (left) shows palay samples to Brunei Industry and Primary Resources Minister Pehin Dato Yahya.

The farm aims to produce at least 4 tons per hectare, which is six-fold than Brunei's 2007 average yield of only 700 kilos per hectare. (J C Jara-Rabara, DA-PhilRice)

Posh restaurant showcases innovative malunggay dishes

By Dondon Carlo P. Lejano

Who would have thought that located in a posh corner in Taguig City is a restaurant which serves malunggay-inspired dishes?

When we hear malunggay, what usually comes into mind is the bunch of green leaves used as an ingredient in traditional Filipino dish like tinola, ginataan, and monggo.

Paul Calvin's Deli, located at the Bonifacio Global City in the Fort, is a two-year-old family restaurant which has malunggay bread and green rice with malunggay as part of their menu.

Yes, one can find these malunggay-based food products in this high-end spot in the urban zone.

These malunggay-inspired food products are not initially part of the restaurant's original menu.

By inventing new dishes to cater to the demands of the more health-conscious customers, Chef Jonatahn Paul Em,



came up with the idea of putting malunggay as an ingredient to their dishes.

"Malunggay is both a good thing and a bad, culinary-wise speaking. Bad because it does not really have a distinct taste which could add up to the flavor of the food; and good because it is very nutritious. So you get the nutritional benefits from malunggay without really noticing it," said Chef Jonathan.

He also added that their family is really into supporting the various campaigns for agriculture. In fact, the malunggay that they use are grown beside their home in Taytay, Rizal. Not to mention the other greens, herbs and root crops, that is also being utilized in their commissary.

Malunggay is easy to grow and is available all year round. It is famous among the tropics. What is being consumed from this tree are the leaves and the fruits.

In the case of Paul Calvin's Deli, though, they only use the leaves to include in their breads and some dishes.

"We include only the freshest malunggay leaves in our breads to guarantee freshness and to ensure quality.

We pick the leaves everyday so the consumers can be confident that the products they buy are indeed of best quality,"



Malunggay-inspired products at Paul Calvin's Deli, a high-end restaurant, in Bonifacio Global City, at the Fort.

claimed Chef Jonnathan.

Sec. Arthur Yap of the Department of Agriculture (DA) once visited this restaurant and highly commended the owners for supporting the government's campaign to go green. As a matter of fact, the secretary even graced the ribbon-cutting ceremony of the restaurant's commissary in Taytay.

The Paul Calvin's Deli commissary in Taytay is where the healthy breads are being baked fresh everyday.

Aside from the malunggay bread or malunggay loaf, they also offer malunggay muffin, malunggay cake, malunggay potato loaf, brazo de calabaza, and the whole wheat complete, which is composed of malunggay, cashew, walnuts, and raisins.

With every single serving of the different variations of malunggay bread, consumers are assured to get seven times the vitamin C from orange, four times the calcium found in milk, three times the vitamin A found in carrots, three times the potassium of banana, and twice the protein in milk.

Meanwhile, another blockbuster malunggay-inspired creation of Chef Jonnathan is the green rice.

For obvious reasons, it is called green rice because of malunggay and other greens like

leek and onions. Not too dull as compared with plain rice; not too oily like the garlic fried or yang chow rice.

Moreover, malunggay is proven very good for breastfeeding mothers because of its calcium content. Aside from this, it is also rich in other minerals like iron, phosphorus, beta carotene, thiamin, niacin, and riboflavin.

"This sure is one bunch of a healthy treat for the whole family to enjoy," said Chef Jonnathan. "Actually, the reception from our regular patrons is very positive that's why we continuously try to discover new dishes which are not only healthy, but also affordable.

Chef Jonnathan added that they are hoping that through word of mouth, their malunggay bread and other good-for-your-health foodstuffs would rather gain even more popularity.

Paul Calvin's Deli, the first in producing malunggay bread, prides itself for having passion for great food.

"We make sure that our customers do not only find our food and tast, we also make it to a point that their health also benefits every time they dine with us. Hence, the incorporation of healthy food products in our menu like malunggay." (DA-Bureau of Agricultural Research)



Chef Jonnathan Paul Em came up with the idea of putting malunggay as an ingredient to their dishes to cater to the demands of the more health-conscious customers.

The sweet taste of success

By Adora D.Rodriguez

"So this is a guy who did not finish school, but had an inquisitive mind, tried, studied and persevered.

"It took him 10 to 15 years.

"Today, this unique guy is one of the biggest suppliers of mangoes in our country."

Thus Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap boasted of mango farmer Lito Arenas of Manaoag, Pangasinan, during the recent graduation at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines.

As a young boy, Arenas was tasked odd jobs at his

father's farm, such as cutting grasses, picking and cleaning mangoes, and tending their fruit stall in Manaoag market in the afternoons after school.

He thus stuck it out with mango farming, rather than practice his BS nursing career.

Mang Lito's business started humbly with only a start-up of P2,500, which he used to buying and selling mangoes.

From trading, he decided to grow mangoes himself, forcing him to travel to as far as Batac, Ilocos Norte, in search for the best mango planting materials for his three-hectare farm.

As expected, he had his share of hardships such as the high cost of fertilizers and other inputs. Fortunately, he had financial support from creditors endorsed by the Department of Agriculture.

"Nandyang po ang DA, mula simula hanggang ngayon," quotes Mang Lito. *"Napakarami na ang naitulong nila sa amin, lalo na pagdating sa mga training."*

Mang Lito narrates how he had to sit thru long days of training to satisfy his thirst for knowledge, and make perfect the technologies he applies to his expanding orchard.

A few trainings later, he felt confident and was able to manage his farm in Manaoag



Lito Arenas (2nd from left) with Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap (left) and Dir. Nick Eleazar of the DA-Bureau of Agricultural Research (right).

and five others under contract-growing scheme, in nearby towns of Binalonan, Villasis,

Sta. Barbara and Bolinao.

In addition, he and wife Ching are also involved in mango seedling propagation, for which they are working closely with the DA's Bureau of Plant Industry and UPLB's Institute of Plant Breeding.

"Ako po ay BPI-certified producer na rin ng mga grafted mango seedlings," he beams.

He makes use of the seeds of fruits whose flesh are sliced off and dried. Such practice does not only provide additional income, in terms of mango seedlings in a couple of weeks, but eliminates wastes.

He has also put up a processing facility that churns out dried mangoes for exports, and provides jobs to 200 Manaoag residents.

"Kaya maraming natutulungan," he points out. *"Masuwerte kami dahil nabigyan kami ng mga gamit pang-process,"* he states.

Indeed luck has shone on him and his neighbors as they were provided with two units of drying machines by the DA's Bureau of Agricultural Research.

"Ngayon meron na rin po kaming dried mangoes, pickled, mangoes with tamarind at saka pickled papayas," he adds.

And there is no stopping Mang Lito.

Recently, he was awarded an extended hot water treatment facility by the DA that will enable him to export fresh mangoes to Hongkong and China.

But even with his accomplishments, Mang Lito never fails to share his knowledge and expertise to his neighbors, wanting to follow in his strides.

Capas Mayor, ex-NPA are top organic fruit farmers

Mayor Reynaldo Catacutan of Capas, Tarlac, and rebel-returnee Bernabe 'Ka Dante' Buscayno have two things in common.

Both are advocates of organic farming, and they are the current top producers of organic bananas and papayas in Central Luzon.

They are succeeding using their respective styles of farming.

Ka Dante's method is based on actual experience in the boon-docks. Catacutan's style is scientific.

Ka Dante started five years ago when a friend from the Lorenzo banana farm in Davao suggested that he engage in banana instead of rice, as it is more profitable.

Thus, he started with 4,000 tissue-cultured seedlings of Cavendish, Lakatan and Latundan, from the Lorenzo farm.

And he does not care if his 32-hectare banana and papaya farm is full of weeds, and practically no post-planting care.

Ka Dante explains that this is done on purpose, learning it from the Dumagats. With such practice, the farm maintains a natural balance. When the bananas shade the weeds, they eventually die and become natural fertilizers.

Weeds have the capacity to accumulate nitrogen from the air and absorb other natural elements from the soil and its decomposition under cultured bananas assures production of truly organic crops, Ka Dante said.

Even Buscayno's source of irrigation water contains natural fertilizers. From a deep well, underground water is collected to an elevated swimming pool. The swimming pool allows bathers to urinate in the pool and free running irrigation pipes connect to the banana farms, further assuring of another source of natural fertilizers.

On the other hand, Mayor Catacutan prefers the more scientific approach.

Opening up sites for his banana plantation, he used tractors for land preparation. And the banana seedlings came from tissue culture laboratories at Tarlac College of Agriculture and Central Luzon State University. He planted similar varieties as Ka Dante's.

Post planting care is done with regular passing of tractors to remove the weeds.

After land preparation, he prepares holes for the seedlings and

puts in chicken dung, which serves as the basal application of fertilizers. Second fertilizer application is four months after planting, where he put additional chicken dung about three feet from the base of the plants.

Both Buscayno and Catacutan refrain from spraying insecticides.

Ka Dante ignores the presence of insects and pests, while Mayor Catacutan smudges the banana plants when he observes the presence of insects.

Thus, they shun away from using plastic bags laden with chemiclas to protect the fruit bunch from pests, a normal practice of banana plantations in Mindanao.

What they do is simply to cover the fruit bunches with folded banana leaves.

Comparing notes on their operating expenses for bananas, Catacutan spends about P80,000 to P100,000 per hectare, while Buscayno spends P50,000 to P70,000 per hectare.

They both sell their bananas at P25 per kilo, realizing a gross income ranging from P250,000 to P350,000 per hectare. (*Pete Samonte*)

SACY on BPRE's 31st Anniv: 'Share resources to attain goals'

"We need to share resources to achieve our goals as fast as we can so that our clientele can benefit from our research results and technology offerings."

Thus said Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap at the 31st anniversary of the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Postharvest Research and Extension (DA-BPRE), held May 26, in Muñoz, Nueva Ecija.

Secretary Yap, who was represented by Assistant Secretary Salvador S. Salacup, also emphasized forging stronger collaboration with postharvest industry partners.

"BPRE continues as an active implementer of DA postharvest program aimed at empowering farmers. With this, I congratulate the agency for another fruitful year of committed action work," he added.

For his part, Congressman Bernardo F. Piñol Jr., of North Cotabato 2nd District, who was the affair's keynote speaker, said agriculture should be prioritized among other national concerns.

During the program, BPRE Dir. Ricardo Cachuela presented the agency's accomplishments in 2008.

"We will continue to empower farmers by doing more research and development activities towards agricultural development."

During the program, he presented to Gov. Josephine Ramirez-Sato of Occidental Mindoro this provincial postharvest development plan.

To which, she expressed support to BPRE for all its undertakings in sustaining agricultural growth and guaranteeing food security.

The event was capped by the recognition of 'Most Active Partners of the Postharvest Industry' and outstanding BPRE employees, turn-over of provincial postharvest development plans, and MOA signing between BPRE



Agriculture Ass't. Sec. Salvador Salacup (2nd from left) presents a plaque to Roberto Agcaoili, farmer-leader of Antagan, Tumaonini, Cagayan, as Rep. Bernardo Pinol of North Cotabato and BPRE Dir. Ricardo Cachuela look on.

and State Universities and Colleges on promoting postharvest initiatives.

A *tekno-talakayan* on various postharvest technologies was also conducted, where business opportunities for processors and other stakeholders were discussed.

Binhi Awards on

The Philippine Agricultural Journalists, Inc. (PAJ) is now accepting entries for its annual contest or *Binhi Awards*.

PAJ president Sanny Galvez said the contest covers eight categories: agricultural journalist, agri-beat reporter, photojournalist, environment writer, magazine, newsletter, info/media campaign, and radio program.

The winners will be announced during the PAJ's 33rd anniversary on September 11, 2009. They will receive cash prizes and trophies.

The PAJ has designated Dr. Matilde Maunahan, of the UP Los Baños Postharvest & Horticulture Research & Training Center, and PAJ vice president for external affairs, as chairperson of the 2009 Binhi Awards committee. She is assisted by PAJ public relations officer Johnny Goloyugo of the Int'l. Rice Research Institute.

Maunahan said contestants should submit entries published, launched or aired from July 1, 2007 to April 30, 2009, with the following requirements:

Agricultural Journalist, Agribeat Reporter, Environment Journalist – original clippings or photocopies of at least 12 best articles;

Photo Journalist – at least 12 published B/W or colored photos with captions;

Agri Magazine & Agri Newsletter – five sets of at least 18 issues (if monthly, July 2007 to December 2008) or six issues (if quarterly);

Info/Media Campaign – five sets of info/media campaign paraphernalia (program brief, posters, flyer, brochure, radio/TV ad, and preferably campaign results review); and Radio Program – five cassette tapes with scripts of at least five best episodes.

Entries should be submitted on or before June 30, 2009 to the Binhi Awards Committee through the Department of Agriculture Information Service, c/o PAJ Vice President Afor internal affairs Noel Reyes, DA Building, Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City.

All entries should be accompanied with a covering or nomination letter signed by the editor, head of agency or institution, and addressed to: The PAJ Binhi Awards Committee.

No entry fees are needed. However, non-PAJ members are encouraged to pay P200 for their initial PAJ membership and 2009 annual fees. For inquiries, please call 920-4080 or 920-0588.

Aklan farmers' day kicks off 'Int'l Year of Natural Fibers' celeb

The Department of Agriculture's Fiber Industry Development Authority (DA-FIDA) commenced the celebration of the "International Year of Natural Fibers (IYNF) 2009" with a Farmers' Field Day, April 21, in Kalibo, Aklan.

The event was graced by Aklan Governor Carlito Marquez, who invited investors to put up pulp mills and generate more income for the Aklanons.

Likewise, he explained Aklan's "Plant now, Pay later" Program to expand abaca areas in the municipalities of Libacao, Banga, Madalag, Ibajay, Altavas, Balete and Makato.

For her part, FIDA Administrator Cecilia Gloria J. Soriano enumerated the four main objectives of the IYNF.

These include: to raise awareness and stimulate demand for natural fibers; encourage appro-

appropriate policies from governments to address industry problems; foster effective and enduring global partnership among industries and stakeholders; and promote efficiency and sustainability of the natural fiber industries.

Soriano said the importance of the natural fiber industry to the Philippine economy cannot be ignored, especially now that consumers prefer environmentally-friendly, natural fiber products.

In particular, Aklan is blessed with abundant natural fibers like abaca, piña, and buri, which are woven into exquisite products that are treasured abroad, she added.

During the program, Soriano handed over an improved hand stripping device (Hagoton) to members of the Banga ARC.

Other activities for the IYNF celebration include the conduct of farmers' field day, forum and mar-

ket linkages, turnover of fiber stripping devices; training on abaca seed production, planting to harvesting, fiber extraction to classification;

Conduct of 6-month abaca Farmers Field Schools;

Abaca Disease Management commencement program;

Distribution of 'green label' farm inputs and supplies;

Consultative Conference on Abaca;

Fashion Show – featuring creations by Filipino designers using Philippine weaves;

Abaca Book Launching;

Issuance of commemorative stamps; and

Hosting of the Joint Sessions of the Inter-Governmental Groups on Hard Fibres and of Jute, Kenaf and Allied Fibers. (DA-FIDA Information and Publication Section)

From the Regions

Selected news and developments on agriculture, fisheries, agribusiness and related sectors, as reported by the DA-Regional Field Units, and those published in national and provincial publications.

BFAR leads mangrove rehab in Cagayan

The fisheries bureau in the region has joined the nationwide reforestation project recently by spearheading mangrove planting activities in the towns of Claveria and Buguey, Cagayan.

According to BFAR Region 2 Director Jovita Ayson, a total of 600 mangrove propagules were planted in both municipalities, in addition to 300 seedlings earlier planted in Bagabag, Nueva Vizcaya.

Ayson said that this mangrove and upland reforestation project dubbed "Puno Ko, Sagip Buhay Mo" was one of the highlights of the Farmers and Fisherfolk Month.

DA-MRDP holds technical writing, strategic planning in ARMM

The Department of Agriculture-Mindanao Rural Development Program in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao recently conducted a three-day Technical Writing on Barangay Development Plan Packaging and Enhancement and Strategic Planning, May 12-14, in Cotabato City.

Participants were composed of municipal agricultural officers, municipal planning development coordinators and program management implementation unit from Maguindanao and Lanao del Sur attended the activity.

MRDP focal person for ARMM Dr. Paisal M. Abdul said the activity highlighted the MRDP-Project Support Office Strategic Planning focused on the four MRDP components: Natural Resource Management, Rural Infrastructure, Investment for Governance Reforms, and Community Fund for Agricultural Development.

The activity will guide the participants on how they could complement each other for proper implementation of projects. Thus hastening and improving the delivery of services to the people.

Part of the activity was the discussion of the key role of the InfoACE in building linkage through proper dissemination of the program objectives to the local government units and other

"This project is BFAR's contribution to mitigate effects of climate change and global warming and at the same time arrest decline of mangrove forests in the country, Ayson said.

A total of 50,000 mangrove propagules were likewise transplanted in Region 4A with Atimonan, Quezon as lead area for the activity's kick-off ceremonies.

Other BFAR regional offices also led reforestation activities in their respective jurisdictions.

Already on its third year, the Puno Ko, Sagip Buhay Mo project is BFAR and fisherfolk's action to revive once vast mangrove forests in the country.

stakeholders under the MRDP.

The group formulated the MRDP-ARMM Implementation Progress Report of each component to be adapted in its program implementation.

Similar activity was also conducted in Zamboanga City for the island provinces of Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi. (RAFID-ARMM)

Typhoons damage palay, corn crops

The three typhoons--*Crising*, *Dante* and *Emong*--that crossed five regions (Cordillera, Ilocos, Cagayan, Central Luzon and Bicol) during the second quarter of 2009 have damaged 350,000 tons of palay and 4,780 tons of corn, according to field reports gathered by the DA Field Operations Service.

The palay loss is roughly one percent of the national target production of 3.4 million tons for the 2nd quarter of 2009. Bicol Region suffered most, with 284,000 ton loss..

As for corn, the loss is merely 0.4% of the national target of 1.3 million tons for the 2nd quarter of 2009. The Cordilleras lost some 1,817 tons, corresponding to 6% of its target. Region V lost 2.7%, followed by Regions III, I and II at 0.8%, 0.4% and 0.02%, respectively.

First small ruminant center rises up in Ilocos

As part of the Department of Agriculture's (DA) expansion program on Rural Enterprise Development for Innovative Goat Production Systems (RED-IGPS), the DA-Regional Field Unit I recently inaugurated the Pugo Small Ruminant Center (SRC) in La Union, the first in the Ilocos Region.

The center aims to empower interested goat raisers and entrepreneurially equip them with goat production systems. Also, it showcases various technologies on goat production and serves as a show window of different breeds of goats such as Anglo-nubian, Saanen, Boer and upgraded breeds which are also for sale.

The upgraded goat offspring such as the F1 breed can be sold at P120 a kilo and the F2 breed (live weight) at P220 a kilo, and chevon (goat meat-dressed) can be sold at P250 per kilo. This serves as an income-generating project for the municipality of Pugo, the barangay council of Cuenca and the farmer-cooperators.

Goat production technologies such as the selection of breeds, housing, nutrient and health management practices are available at the SRC for duplication and adoption by interested farmers. The goat production program is part of the DA's vision of reducing poverty incidence in the countryside while at the same time improving the daily income of farmers.

DA-RFU I is also set to expand the project in other municipalities of La Union - Bacnotan, San Juan, and Bauang and two municipalities of Pangasinan and distribute seedlings and seedling materials for the establishment of forage garden through the Ginintuang Masaganang Ani-livestock program.

Bicol farmers train on veggie prod'n

Over 170 farmers in San Agustin, Pili, Camarines Sur are currently on a three-month training on high-value vegetable production under the *Kabalikat sa Kabuhayan* Program, initiated by the SM Foundation Incorporated (SMFI), HARBEST Agribusiness Corporation, Department of Agriculture Regional Field Unit 5 and local government units.

They will be trained to employ modern technologies that include raising vegetables in a greenhouse, use of mulch, organic fertilizers and pesticides.

The DA is extending technical assistance, the training venue and the 5,000-square meter techno demo site at the Bicol Experiment Station (BEST), serving as the Farmer Field School (FFS).

For their part, HARBEST is providing the seeds, other inputs, and the technology; while SMFI will be the market outlet for the vegetables that will be produced, particularly at the newly-opened SM Mall in Naga City.

The training program consists of lectures and hands-on training, using the Farmers Field School concept.

The project launch was attended by DA-RFU 5 Dir. Jose Dayao, Cristie Angeles of SMFI, Arsenio Barcelona of HARBEST, and other local officials and agri entrepreneurs.



Oddity. The longest bunch of native banana, known as Amurosa, raised by a farmer in Barangay Kangrunaan, Batac, Ilocos Norte. It was one of the popular attractions at the Agri Fair in Tubao, La Union, held May 10, 2009.

ICRISAT appoints Dr. Dar for 3rd term

The Governing Board of the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) has appointed Director General, Dr William D Dar, for a third five-year term in office. Dr Dar will continue as the Director General of ICRISAT from January 2010 to December 2014.

Recommending an unprecedented third term for Dr Dar, the ICRISAT Governing Board stated that the members are “unanimous and requests William D Dar to sign a further contract for 5 years as the Director General of ICRISAT from January 2010 to December 2014.”

Assessing Dr Dar’s performance for 2008, the Board report stated that “the view of the GB is that the DG had another most successful year. It recognized the continuing high morale of Team ICRISAT. The higher than anticipated growth in revenues and the budget surplus are impressive. The GB highly commended the DG for the great success of 2008, excellent performance, strong leadership and big achievements in the last 9 years.”

Accepting the Governing Board’s offer, Dr Dar said that the third term gives him the opportunity to continue his work of leading a world-class team that delivers high-quality science research products that improve the livelihood of the poor dryland farmers and to grow the institute to the next level.

“As the leading international dryland agricultural research institute, ICRISAT has improved the productivity of nutritious dryland crops that help sustain the lives of the poor farmers. By helping the farmers to overcome current risks we enable them to climate-proof their agricultural systems for the future,” Dr Dar said.

Dr Dar joined ICRISAT as the Director General in January 2000. His first five-year term was renewed for a further period of five years from January 2005 to December 2009.

During the past 10 years, Dr Dar

led ICRISAT through scientific and financial achievements, winning the Institute two consecutive ‘Outstanding’ ratings (for 2006 and 2007) from the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and the World Bank.

ICRISAT also received positive reports from two External Pro-



Former DA Secretary William Dar

gram and Management Reviews (EPMRs), held in 2003 and 2009.

The EPMR of 2009 had noted: “ICRISAT today is a thriving research institute with a strong leadership and with a unique capacity to address poverty alleviation, food security, and natural resource protection in the semi-arid tropics.”

Further, the EPMR report added: “The current DG has been effective in stabilizing and growing ICRISAT’s financial security,

building a strong management team and meeting the center’s scientific mandates.”

ICRISAT achieved scientific breakthroughs under Dr Dar’s leadership. The world’s first pigeonpea hybrid through the cytoplasmic male sterility system was launched in 2007. Also in 2007 was the launch of commercial production of ethanol from sweet sorghum, initiated through collaboration between ICRISAT and Rusni Distilleries. The world’s first pearl millet hybrid, developed through molecular marker-assisted selection and breeding, was launched in 2005.

In sub-Saharan Africa, ICRISAT promoted pigeonpea cultivation, strengthened seed systems, improved nutrient utilization and productivity through fertilizer microdosing, and diversified agricultural systems through African Market Gardens.

During Dr Dar’s tenure, ICRISAT’s annual budget doubled from US\$ 24.6 million in 2003 to US\$ 50.5 million in 2008. Likewise, ICRISAT achieved budget surplus from 2003 to 2008 through intensive resource mobilization activities and sound financial management. (ICRISAT)

Japan recycles unused food into swine feed

Around a hundred tons of food per day, is brought to a 2,700-



square-meter factory in a gorge in Chiba where it is blended down and turned into pig food.

Every morning, a fleet of trucks arrives with products ranging from quail eggs to cream, desserts, pizzas, etc. All are edible foods and are only gets accepted depending on whether it could be eaten.

According to Toshihiro Ishii, head of liquid feed production at Bright Pig Chiba, they don’t give pigs food that couldn’t be given to humans.

The factory produces 100 tons of feed a day, enough for 37,000 pigs, which is then delivered to four pig farms in the region.

These farms slaughter 6,500 pigs a month, which subse-

Animal diseases are linked to climate change

The worldwide study conducted by the OIE among all its national delegates proved the impact of climate change on the emergence and re-emergence of animal diseases.

Dr Bernard Vallat, Director General of the OIE explained that more and more countries are indicating that climate change has been responsible for at least one emerging or re-emerging disease occurring on their territory. He added that this is a reality that can not be ignored and the Veterinary Services throughout the world should be equipped with systems that comply with international standards of good governance to be able to deal with this problem and prevent new dangers.

OIE Members have consequently given the Organization a mandate to address this issue by using its scientific capabilities and networks, especially at global, regional and sub-regional levels. In particular, they advocate new action at the level of research, national capacity building for public and private sector animal health systems, and communication, with the aim of preventing or reducing the effects of climate change on animal production and diseases, including those transmissible to humans.

The majority of countries also consider that human influence on the environment has an impact on climate change and therefore on the emergence or re-emergence of animal diseases. (www.worldpoultry.net)

quently end up on dining tables across the prefecture.

According to estimates by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, 19 million tons of food are thrown away every year, of which 5 to 9 million tons are edible. Food recycling laws present in Japan have prompted companies to look for ways of disposing of their excess products. (www.pigprogress.net)



Saudis eye... (from p1)

cial Corporation (DA-PADCC), in his report to Secretary Arthur Yap.

The Saudis were in the country May 5-8, 2009, commencing with business matching with members of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry at the Peninsula Manila Hotel, and a trip to Davao, touring a banana plantation, a cardava banana processing facility, and a mariculture park in Panabo city.

As a result of the Saudis planned investments, Agbon said the DA is proposing the establishment of exclusive economic zones for



Dr. Balghunaim and Sec. Yap

agribusiness that would take into consideration the nuances of food production and an expanded set of incentives for locators.

"The recent visit of the Saudi investors has compelled us to seek solution to a dilemma where investors want to own the land they are putting investments into.

Saudi companies want that, but again, that is not allowed by ex-

Corn price... (from p1)

He said President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo has already instructed the Department of Finance to set aside funds for the NFA's corn procurement budget, initially totaling P3.9 billion.

Corn farmers, led by the Philippine Maize Federation (PhilMaize) and National Corn Board (NCB), have welcomed the increase as it will encourage them to increase production and achieve the country's corn production target for 2009.

PhilMaize president Roger Navarro said they can now catch up with production and close the supply demand gap for yellow corn.

For her part, NCB vice president Rosallie Ellasus said the higher support price is the best subsidy for farmers, even better than seeds and fertilizer support.

Even with the increase of the support price, the NCB has asked for more reforms. These include

isting Philippine laws," said Agbon.

He said Secretary Yap has recently approached the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) on the creation of such zones. Ideally, the zones should be near airports or seaports.

The DA-PADCC is now surveying areas where the ecozones could be built.

Among others, it is tasked to assist prospective foreign and Filipino investors in the country's agriculture, fishery, food processing and export industries.

Agbon said the DA also wants to expand the scope of incentives for agribusiness

economic zone locators.

Currently, the PEZA and the Board of Investments (BOI) grant Filipino and foreign investors up to eight years maximum of income tax holiday—specifically for firms registered with the BOI as a 'pioneer' business—and a five-percent gross income tax in lieu of all national and local taxes for PEZA registered firms.

the suspension in the implementation of the ASEAN Free Trade Agreement (AFTA) and lowering of tariffs, to between zero to five percent; the establishment and development of corn centers; investment incentives for postharvest facilities and logistics; and establishment of a Corn Development Authority.

Secretary Yap added the NFA will buy the 300,000 MT of corn through electronic trading, which will give farmers the flexibility in selling their produce.

He hopes the NFA corn e-trading will be a precursor to a commodity futures exchange that he envisions, which should be a joint initiative of government and the private sector.

Yap said this will be one of his agenda on the forthcoming state visit of President Arroyo to Brazil, where he will study the rudiments of a future exchange and how to set it up properly in the Philippines.



PINOY AGRI-KART. Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap (left) proposes a toast after unveiling the Pinoy Agri Kart, an initiative of the DA through the Philippine Agricultural Development and Commercial Corporation. With him (from left) are PhilFoodex president Roberto Amores and Mayet Biliran of Candabong Multipurpose Cooperative.

DA unveils.. (from p1)

The buyers, represented by Philfoodex, inquired on the volumes and quality of durian that they could procure from Davao, and aquamarine products particularly tuna from Toril.

Secretary Yap and Dir. Frisco Malabanan of the GMA-Rice program also has the chance to talk with Severino Payumo of Nueva Ecija, who shared his triumph in harvesting a national record of 345 cavans of hybrid rice per hectare from his farm in Barangay Buliran, Cabanatuan City.

Payumo was with DA Region 3 Director Redentor Gatus at the DA regional office in San Fernando, Pampanga.

The 'virtual techno and market link' project made use of the Voice Over Internet Protocol or VOIP.

"This initiative is a major step towards speeding up agricultural extension and technology sharing, and linking directly agri-fishery producers in the countryside with in-

The country used to have the Manila International Futures Exchange (MIFE), but the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) revoked its license and shut it down in 1997, following massive fraud and irregularities committed by its officials and brokers. (Excerpted reports from *The Philippine Star* and *Business Mirror*)

stitutional buyers in major markets, here and abroad," declared Secretary Yap.

The second project involves the *Pinoy Agri Kart*, designed as a mini-jeepney, that serves as a mobile display counter to promote and sell export quality Philippine processed food and beverage products.

A brainchild of the DA through its Philippine Agriculture Development and Commercial Corporation, the *Pinoy Agri Kart* will be deployed in major international and domestic airports in the country, DA regional offices, selected DA agencies, including international food trade shows abroad.

Secretary Yap said the kart may be serve as an investment option and enterprise for overseas Filipino workers and retirees through an affordable social franchising scheme.

Both projects were part of the culminating activities of the 'Farmers' and Fisherfolk's Month celebration, which started with a eucharistic celebration in honor of San Isidro Labrador, the patron Saint of peasants and laborers.

Every year in the month May, the DA spearheads the nationwide celebration of the Farmers' and Fisherfolk's Month, as per Presidential Proclamation No. 33 signed by former President Corazon C. Aquino, on March 23, 1989.

RP calls for time-bound action plans to save oceans

The Philippines has called for the immediate implementation of "time-bound" action plans that involve funding the expansion of model initiatives on effective marine conservation and coastal management programs to save the world's oceans from the devastating impact of climate change.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap, who headed the Philippine delegation to the first-ever World Ocean Conference (WOC) in Manado, Indonesia, May 15, 2009, said such initiatives should be supported with funds and expertise to allow countries share information and best practices with other nations.

"Most of all, no amount of mitigation and adaptation will be effective unless a decision is made to stop pollution now," said Yap in his speech during the WOC plenary session.

"All countries must pledge to prioritize stopping the poisoning of the earth in dramatic and substantive levels, instead of measured and ineffective tranches," he said. "No strategy can work where environment and marine degradation does not first come to a decided stop."

Yap noted that if the world can set aside trillions of dollars to save companies reeling from the current global economic meltdown,



(Photo by Nolet Fulgencio, DA-OSEC)

Coral Triangle Initiative. Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap (left) confers with Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (right) at the Coral Triangle Initiative Summit, held May 15, 2009, in Manado, Indonesia.

it must also be able to galvanize the will and the funds "to nurse Mother Earth back to health," especially at this critical time "when it has already started to reap the whirlwind for our past and continuing sins and omissions."

"The message for Copenhagen is that, the initiatives undertaken by many of the coastal countries must be supported by resources and expertise, so that the information and practices learned can be shared among nations and

communities." Yap said, referring to the upcoming United Nations Climate Change Conference in December 2009.

The WOC, where 76 countries adopted the Manado Ocean Declaration, was organized by Indonesia.

The Copenhagen talks are expected to clear the way to a new agreement on reducing carbon emissions by a set target for all developed nations by 2012, when the Kyoto Protocol expires.

Yap said the Philippines has been practicing Integrated Coastal Management and is expanding its network of Marine Protected Areas.

Further, the Philippines is a strong advocate of the ecosystems approach in fisheries management as a means to attain food security and reduce poverty.

"We are ready to share what we know with the world in as much as we are ready to learn from others as well," Yap said.

Besides calling for the inclusion of ocean issues in the agenda of the Copenhagen conference, the non-binding Manado Ocean Declaration also urged nations to reduce ocean pollution, fund sustainable development programs in Third World countries, and carry out deeper research work into how climate change affects oceans and the role oceans play in fighting climate change.

DA shares P136M for 4 rice centers

The government is allotting P136 million as counterpart to bankroll a Korea-sponsored project, totaling P785 million, that involves the construction of four rice processing centers (RPCs) in four provinces: Pangasinan, Iloilo, Bohol and Davao del Sur.

Agriculture Undersecretary Berna Romulo Puyat said of the amount, P104 million will come from the DA, and the rest from the respective local government units.

The main bulk of P649 M will come from the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA).

"The DA's contribution to the project will take care of the inland transportation, taxes and project management, while the fund from LGUs will be used for site development," Puyat said in a report to Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap.

When completed, the RPCs will help create jobs and increase incomes of 5,160 farmers.

The RPCs, which will cover 9,292 hectares, is expected to create 2,737 jobs during the construction phase, and another 4,627 jobs for the next 15 years, according to the DA's Bureau of Postharvest Research and Extension (BPRE).

Over 222,000 farm laborers, BPRE said, are also expected to benefit from the project.

The RPCs will be built in Sta. Barbara, Pangasinan; Pototan, Iloilo; Pilar, Bohol; and Matanao, Davao del Sur.

A team of inspectors from KOICA recently visited the country to assess the budgetary requirements and mode of implementation for the construction phase.

Puyat said the establishment of the four RPCs in the Philippines follows the successful implementation of the first RPC in Baler, Aurora in 2007, which was built through a \$2.3 million grant from KOICA.

This second phase of the construction of RPCs in the Philippines, Puyat said, will benefit 40 of the country's palay-growing provinces.

"The construction of the RPCs was encouraged by Korea to promote efficient postharvest operations for our palay farmers through mechanization and automation," she added.

RP is 53rd country with A(H1N1) flu

The Philippines joins other 52 countries with laboratory-confirmed cases of Influenza A(H1N1) infection, as of 06:00 GMT, May 29, 2009, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

It reported that there were 15,510 reported cases, with 99 deaths. led by Mexico with 85; USA with 11; Canada, 2; and Costa Rica, 1.

The Department of Health (DOH) said the Philippines has 21 confirmed cases of Influenza A (H1N1), as of May 31.

For the entire month of May, the DOH has monitored 315 Cases Under Observation (CUO), of which 262 were negative, and 32 are still under observation.

Meanwhile, Department of Ag-

riculture officials, led by Assistant Secretary Salvador Salacup and Bureau of Animal Industry Director Davinio Catbagan, and hog industry leaders have agreed to employ initiatives to erase misconceptions that link pork consumption to the A(H1N1) virus.

Both the WHO and the Office International des Epizooties (OIE) have been reiterating that the A(H1N1) virus cannot be contracted by eating pork, and the current infection was and is being transmitted from human to human, and not from swine to human.

The hog industry leaders said they will continue to partner with the DA to improve hog productivity and efficiency to attain global competitiveness and viability.