

BARChronicle

The official newsletter of the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Agricultural Research

Agrobiodiversity use and conservation towards sustainable food systems

“The project creates awareness on the contribution and importance of agrobiodiversity conservation and sustainable use in the pursuit of sustainable food systems,” Engr. Ariel Cayanán, Department of Agriculture (DA) undersecretary for operations and agri-mechanization, said during the agrobiodiversity online symposium on 15 June 2021 via video conferencing.

As part of the United Nations Food Security Summit (UNFSS) series of activities, the DA and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) spearheaded the said online symposium titled, “Dynamic Conservation and Sustainable Use of Agrobiodiversity in Traditional Agroecosystems: Empowering IPs towards Sustainable Food Production Systems.”

Livestreamed via DA-Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR)’s official Facebook page, representatives from FAO provided an overview of the DA-BAR-FAO project, “Dynamic Conservation and Sustainable Use of Agro-Biodiversity in Traditional Agroecosystems of the Philippines”

(ABD Project). Also included in the presentations were the developed policies on agrobiodiversity for the empowerment of the vulnerable sector, different piloting activities on agrobiodiversity conservation and sustainable use practices, and developed communication and knowledge products.

“In relation to this, the project is also very much anchored to the United Nations’ 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)— more specifically on the second goal, which is zero hunger,” Usec. Cayanán, also serving as Project Steering Committee (PSC) chair, emphasized.

The presentation further underscored various activities that have empowered Indigenous Peoples of its pilot sites – Hingyon and Hungduan in Ifugao are primarily populated by the Tuwali group while T’bolis are the largest indigenous group in Lake Sebu. They served as partner beneficiaries who participated in the enhancement and expansion of dynamic conservation practices. Seventeen community seedbanks were provided to the 17

pilot barangays as well.

The project also capacitated the IP communities in value addition and enterprise development for the identified agrobiodiversity crops— traditional rice varieties, taro, yam, banana, ginger, tomato, and abaca, among others.

Working closely with the local government units (LGUs), the project has enhanced and expanded the knowledge among local decision makers and community members on the application of dynamic ABD conservation practices and their relation to cultural heritage, hence, intensifying knowledge sharing.

Local communities were also given access to farming and food processing tools, equipment, and facilities to improve productivity and sustainability while reducing postharvest losses.

Farmer partners from the IP Communities and LGU representatives shared their testimonials via video.

Sharing key messages during the symposium were Dr. Vivencio Mamaril, DA-FAO PSC co-chair and DA-BAR director; and Kati Hannele ▶ 2

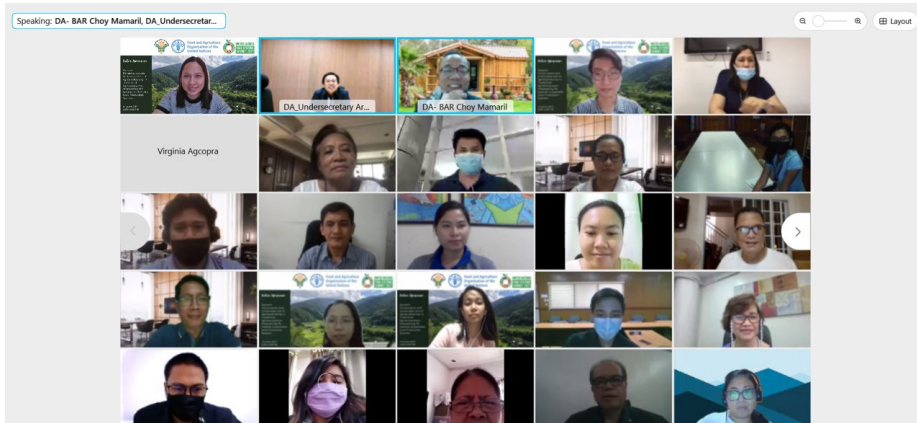
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DA Usec. Cayanán (top row, 2nd from left), PSC chair for the DA-FAO project, and DA-BAR director Mamaril (top row, 3rd from left), PSC co-chair, lead the officials and staff of DA and DA-BAR during the UNFSS Agrobiodiversity online symposium.

Top 20 MAYA intern finalists pitch their agribusiness ventures

With five minutes each, the top 20 Mentoring and Attracting the Youth in Agribusiness (MAYA) intern finalists of the Department of Agriculture (DA)'s "Success Begins at 40k: Best MAYA Micro-Agribusiness Plan" virtually presented their agribusiness plans and ideas—with highlights on business sustainability, products or services, operations and production plans, marketing, and financial plans—to a panel of judges on 22 June 2021 via video conferencing.

Spearheaded by DA-Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) director and MAYA Coordinating Unit member Dr. Vivencio Mamaril, the abovementioned event featured agribusinesses plans which revolved around lettuce, banana chips, mushrooms, vermicompost, hydroponics, peppers, adlai, virgin coconut oil, textile, tablea, sugarcane, squid, cashew, and milkfish, among others.

The panel of judges for the said activity included Cherrie Atilano, AGREA president and founding farmer; Ana Margarita Hontiveros-Malvar, Agripreneurship and Sulu and Marawi Projects of the Philippine Center for Entrepreneurship-Go Negosyo adviser; Abegail Famadico, Philippine Center for Entrepreneurship-Go Negosyo project associate; and Engr. Cesar Pineda, VastNet Telecoms Inc. chief executive officer.

BAR CHRONICLE highlights the bureau's activities as the country's national coordinating agency for agriculture and fishery R4D, and provides updates on NaRDSAF-member institutions.

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With the finalists being evaluated based on innovativeness, entrepreneurial attributes, revenue stream, value addition, presentation, and delivery, 10 best agribusiness plans garnered the highest scores and were announced as winners on 23 June 2021.

The 10 winners were Rhema Joyce Mondala of DA-Ilocos Region (RJ's Integrated Vermishroom); Krizza Joy Peracho of DA-Central Luzon (Soil Keeper Vermicompost); Camille Doguilles of DA-Central Luzon (MushRaff Mushroom Noodles); Joveil Velasco of DA-MIMAROPA (Kaju: Cashew Apple Vinegar); Rodney Dela Cerna of DA-Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) Central Visayas (Mardebangs: Marinated and Deboned Bangus); Cherry Agbon of DA-Agricultural Training Institute-Regional Training Center Northern Mindanao (Mamang's Banana Chips); Jamaica Ejida of DA-BFAR Northern Mindanao (Jam's

PUSITSiritsit); Kristine Faith Agato of DA-Davao Region (Integrated Rabbitry and Black Soldier Fly); Ana Fe Daal of DA Caraga (Tablea Processing and Marketing); and Jessielyn Alfuentes of Philippine Rubber Research Institute (Jess's Scented Virgin Coconut Oil). Each winner received a cash prize of PhP 40,000 as start-up capital to support their agribusiness ventures.

The 10 interns who won under the "Success Begins at 40k: Best MAYA Micro-Agribusiness Plan" were formally awarded on 29 June 2021 via the Cisco Webex platform—together with the 26 winners of the "Best MAYA Interns" and the 30 winners of the "Best MAYA Photo Journey" categories.

In recognition of the interns' efforts and successes under the three categories, the DA, through the bureau, awarded a total of 66 notable young winners for the MAYA Program. ### (**Jireh Alodia R. Laxamana**)



The top 10 winners of the DA's "Success Begins at 40k: Best MAYA Micro-Agribusiness Plan" feature agribusiness plans and ideas on banana chips, virgin coconut oil, milkfish, mushrooms, vermicompost, squid, tablea, and cashew. PHOTOS COURTESY OF CDOGUILLES AND KJPERACHO/DA-RFO CENTRAL LUZON; JVELASCO/DA-RFO MIMAROPA; RDELACERNA/DA-BFAR CENTRAL VISAYAS; CAGBON/DA-ATI-RTC NORTHERN MINDANAO; AND JALFUENTE/DA-PRRI

◀ **1...Agribiodiversity use and** Tanninen, FAO representative in the Philippines.

Providing an overview of the UNFSS, Usec. Rodolfo Vicerra, PSC co-chair and DA undersecretary for policy and planning discussed the different actions tracks. These include access to safe and nutritious food for all; sustainable consumption; nature-positive production; livelihoods and equality; and boost

resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks, and stress.

The United Nations is organizing the 2021 UNFSS on 28-29 July 2021 in Rome, Italy. Related to this, the UN Food Systems Summit will launch bold new actions, solutions and strategies to deliver progress on all 17 SDGs, each of which relies on healthier, more sustainable and more equitable food systems. ### (**Ma. Eloisa H. Aquino**)

The Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA) virtually turned over the technology demonstration learning farm to Mindoro State University (MinSU, formerly Mindoro State College of Agriculture and Technology) for calamansi research on 21 June 2021 via Zoom and livestreamed on SEARCA's Facebook page.

SEARCA director Dr. Glenn Gregorio and MinSU president Dr. Levy Arago, Jr. led the ceremonial turnover. Representatives from SEARCA, MinSU, University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB), Provincial Agriculture Office of Oriental Mindoro, Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Agricultural Research (DA-BAR) as well as calamansi growers' cooperatives and other key stakeholders attended the event.

"Our flagship commodity in the university is calamansi. Our calamansi research and development will be our best entry point in order to bring together our strengths as a research institution in collaboration with the local government units, private sector industries to address the technical and market constraints that confront the calamansi industry," said MinSU vice president for research, development and extension Dr. Christian Anthony Agutaya.

He also shared the various R4D

SEARCA turns over calamansi techno demo learning farm to MinSU



undertakings that the university will be implementing to address the gaps and concerns in the calamansi industry in the province.

"We hope that this undertaking will help us to continue to keep alive our contribution to sustainable development amidst COVID-19 pandemic and economic recovery," Dr. Agutaya added.

With an area of 2,500 square meters that could accommodate 156 plants with four by four meters spacing, the learning site at Victoria, Oriental Mindoro was placed at a strategic position. MIMAROPA has the widest area planted with calamansi at 6,872 hectares

whereas the municipality of Victoria is the largest producer in the region.

"The techno demo learning farm for calamansi is really important as we expect this to serve as a [venue] to showcase the appropriate, modern, climate-resilient production technologies [and] cultural pest management systems. [This] will serve as a benchmark not only for the farmers but also as inputs for the annual investment plans of the local government units," said Oriental Mindoro provincial agriculturist Christine Pine.

Ruel Sanchez, Victoria Kalamansi Farmers Federation president, ▶ 4

Beekeeping enterprise spurs hope for disadvantaged communities in Lanao, Mindoro



Dr. Cervancia discusses the importance of bees as pollinator during the Lanao del Norte Bee Day held on 26 March 2019. PHOTO: RHERMOSO

Results of beekeeping projects in Lanao del Norte and Mindoro were shared during the monthly free seminar of the Department of

Agriculture-Bureau of Agricultural Research on 30 June 2021 via video conferencing.

The community-based beekeeping enterprises were made possible through packages of technology on sustainable rearing of stingless bee species.

Dr. Cleofas Cervancia, resource speaker and bee scientist of the University of the Philippines Los Baños, highlighted that beekeeping contributes to the achievement of all the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

Stingless bees (*Tetragonula bironi*) were used in the projects citing the following reasons: native to Asia, can easily be propagated, have rich genetic pool, considered

sustainable, and good pollinators of native plants.

The setting up of a beekeeping enterprise starts with the usual site validation and selection, training, and monitoring.

Firstly, colonies should be installed after careful consideration of existing regulations on the movement of biological materials. Unless records state previous presence in the area, species cannot be introduced.

Then, bee plants such as Cuphea, Turnera zinnia, marigold, yellow bus, *cadena de amor*, cosmos, Gomphrena, and aratiles should be prepared and grown. Training on bee product processing should also be undertaken. Afterwards, ▶ 4

Edible landscaping starter kits distribution rolls out in Metro Manila



PHOTO COURTESY OF UPLB EL TEAM

To further promote urban agriculture and the Department of Agriculture's (DA) "Plant, Plant, Plant Program" among households in Metro Manila, the University of the Philippines Los Baños Edible Landscaping (UPLB-EL) Team started distributing the EL starter kits to local government units (LGUs) in Metro Manila in June 2021.

On 2 June, the UPLB EL Team turned over more than 1,000 starter kits to Quezon City (QC). The kits were received by the QC Sustainable Development Affairs Unit headed by Emmanuel Hugh Velasco.

Also, more than 500 starter kits each were turned over to Parañaque and Muntinlupa City on 17 and 22 June, respectively.

The distribution of the kits were led by the Parañaque City Agricultural, Fisheries and Aquatic Services Office, headed by Amelia M. Hernandez as part of their ELO Program or "Mag Edible Landscaping Tayo!," and the Muntinlupa Department of Agriculture and Extension Services Office led by Marilou O. Lobo.

The starter kits which include sample seeds, seedling tray, trowel, and sample designs, will be distributed to selected beneficiaries of the LGUs.

The distribution of kits is a component of the "Edible Landscaping: Magtanim ng Gulay para sa Isang Masagana, Malusog, at Makulay na Buhay" project which is funded by DA-Bureau of Agricultural Research. ### (**Melanie Ilang-Ilang, John Bryan Lawas, Bryan Apacionado/UPLB EL Team**)

◀**3...SEARCA turns over calamansi** and Christie Marasigan, Matulatula Agrarian Reform Community Cooperative manager both expressed their gratitude towards the project team for teaching them the updated knowledge and technologies on calamansi production.

The activity was part of the sustainability plan of SEARCA-implemented project titled, Upgrading the Calamansi Value Chain towards Improving the Calamansi Industry of Oriental Mindoro, which was funded by DA-BAR.

Implemented in collaboration with UPLB, MinSU, the local government units in Victoria, Naujan, and Pola, Oriental Mindoro,

the two year-project aimed to address the technical and market constraints of the calamansi industry in Oriental Mindoro.

The virtual ceremonial turnover was followed by a webinar on good agricultural and manufacturing practices. Resource speakers were Dr. Juliet Ochasan, DA-Bureau of Plant Industry-Baguio National Crop Research, Development and Production Support Center; Dr. Flor Ceballo, Dr. Filomena Sta. Cruz, Leslie Angela Roces, Bryan Apacionado, Dr. Josephine Agravante, Dr. Ma. Josie Sumague, and Dr. Matilde Maunahan of UPLB; and Agnes Perpetua Legaspi, Department of Trade and Industry-Export Marketing Bureau assistant director. ### (**Rena S. Hermoso**)

◀**3...Beekeeping enterprise spurs** pollinators were sampled and identified for profiling.

Some of the products the communities were able to produce and market are honey, pollen, and propolis.

In an initial colony of 1,000 bees, 750 grams of honey per colony can be harvested which can be sold at Php 2,000 per kilo; 1.5 kilos of pollen at Php 500 per kilo; and 250 grams of propolis at Php 500 per kilo.

In addition, value-added products are also being produced such as line of soaps and other cosmetic products like lip balm, ointment, and cream.

Beekeeping enterprise is deemed profitable as propolis is highly valued and recognized in apitherapy.

At present, the project is eyeing commercialization and further boosting of enterprise development upon receiving funds from the Agriculture Competitiveness and Enhancement Fund in December 2019.

Almost 300 individuals participated in the said seminar while, the video has garnered over 3,000 views from people around the world through the bureau's official Facebook page. ### (**Jhon Marvin R. Surio**)

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