

AGRARIAN

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CRUZ HIGHLIGHTS IMPORTANCE OF TEAMWORK TO ENSURE SUCCESS OF CARP

Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) Secretary Bernie F. Cruz emphasized the importance of teamwork to ensure the success of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP).

This was the gist of Cruz's message during the three-day DAR year-end summative assessment and 2022 direction-setting conference for the Mindanao group which started yesterday February 1, 2022, held in Davao City.

"Let us follow the directives of President Rodrigo Roa Duterte. Let us also continue what was started by former Secretary John R. Castricones

and finish the acquisition and distribution of lands for the agrarian reform beneficiaries of CARP. When we work together and help each other, we surely can succeed," Cruz said.

Cruz said the activity is focused on ensuring that the development thrusts of the administration of President Duterte are integrated into the programs and services of DAR.

"After the distribution of land, we should focus on how we can provide support services to our farmer-beneficiaries. Let us discuss and find ways on how we can mobilize resources by coordinating closely with other agencies and field offices,"

Cruz said.

The CARP assessment is an annual activity of the DAR to ensure the transparency and accountability of the agrarian reform program.

Cruz said that there is a need to continuously assess the program performance and set the program directions of the Department for 2022. It is also being undertaken to analyze the previous year's sectorial performances of the DAR on land tenure security, agrarian justice delivery, agrarian reform beneficiaries development and sustainability, foreign-assisted and special projects office (FASPO), and

support to parcelization of lands for individual titling (SPLIT) project vis-à-vis its approved targets and fund utilization.

"This assessment would help us evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of CARP implementation in the country," he said.

The blended assessment and direction-setting conference will be conducted in three separate batches for the Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao groups, via face to face and online streaming.

ALBAY FARMERS YIELD 7,000 CAVANS OF PALAY AFTER RECEIVING IRRIGATION PROJECT FROM DAR

Agrarian reform farmers in Albay province were able to harvest higher palay yields of up to 120 cavans per hectare after the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) turned over a P11.6-million Manawan Communal Irrigation System (CIS) that irrigates over 60 hectares of riceland in Barangay Manawan and Quinartilan in the town of Camalig. The CIS, which was turned over last year, with concrete 2.8-kilometer line canals, has provided a steady supply of irrigation water from the Malobago river in Guinobatan, Albay, allowing the 211 farmer-beneficiaries and other palay planters to make more cropping a year to produce rice. DAR Bicol Regional Director Rodrigo Realubit said the farmers in this community continue to have higher farm yields and overshoot their previous average yield of 60 cavans per hectare per cropping season. "Farmers in the said barangays used to cultivate palay only twice a year. Since the turnover of the irrigation project, they have already harvested twice and the farmers yield about 120

cavans per hectare in 60 hectares of ricefields which was about more than 7,000 cavans per harvest season. For this year, the farmers are excited to see how many times they could plant their crop and if their yields would still increase," Realubit said. Rio Olavario, who tills a 1.5-hectare riceland in Barangay Manawan, recounted that their situation was difficult at that time since they were only producing 15 to 20 cavans per hectare every harvest. "Due to shortage of water, I can only plant once or twice each year. With the newly concreted irrigation canals, wider tracks of riceland could now be reached with sufficient water, thus giving us hope to make up for our losses in the past years. I already harvested between 100 to 120 cavans during the last cropping season," Olavario said. Meanwhile, Dante Nuñez, President of Manawan Irrigators' Association, said the farmers could now maximize their production through a sufficient supply of water, paving the way to increasing their farm incomes.

"My farm yield has doubled compared to my previous harvests. We are very grateful to DAR for financing the repairs of the damaged dam and the upgrading of the line canals. We had to get up at 2 a.m. to irrigate our farms back then. But now, we have a nearly unlimited supply of irrigation water," Nuñez said. Nuñez divulged that the dam was damaged by a succession of typhoons that hit the Bicol Region in recent years, resulting in a decrease in palay yields and leaving farmers devastated. The National Irrigation Administration undertook the rehabilitation works of the Manawan CIS under the support services component of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program. The project is designed to provide agrarian reform farming communities with infrastructure facilities to boost the agricultural production and income of agrarian reform beneficiaries. At the moment, the Irrigator's Association is also working out with the DAR to finance the extension of the irrigation project to supply additional 15-hectare rice fields.

Complete Camp Keithley survey, identify those affected, and immediately distribute lands to Marawi ARBs – Cruz

Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) Secretary Bernie Cruz today instructed the DAR Field Operations Office and its Northern Mindanao regional office to immediately complete the survey activities on Camp Keithley in Marawi City, identify those who will be affected, and distribute the lands to the identified agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) in the area. "The distribution of idle government-owned lands is a top priority following the issuance by President Rodrigo Roa Duterte of Executive Order No. 75, series of 2019," Cruz said. He said that Camp Keithley is the jumpstart activity of the agency to immediately distribute the area to qualified ARBs as part of the directive under EO No. 75. DAR-Northern Mindanao regional director Zoraida O. Macadindang in her progress report identified the issues on the coverage of Camp Keithley military reservation, which includes among others, the resistance of the potential ARBs/applicants in Barangay Alinun, Saguwaran on the conduct of the survey, and delay in the conduct of subdivision survey due to absence of potential ARBs/applicants at the time of the survey. She added that the DAR in Marawi cancelled a pulong-pulong in Poblacion Ilian, Piagapo due to a family feud in the area. In addition, most of the applicants are occupying residential areas while others still have no agricultural lands in their possession. "As per survey contract, the contractor is required to conduct survey activities on agricultural lands with hectarage as a parameter costing. But there are residential lots subject for subdivision. Thus, the conduct of residential lots survey will entail higher cost and adverse claimants are not known by the local government units concerned," Macadindang said.

Macadindang recommended, among others for the DAR to coordinate with the Philippine National Police, Department of National Defense for security assistance, proper coordination with the LGUs concern and intensification on the information dissemination relative to the schedule of survey and conduct actual validation of applicants or potential ARBs during the scheduled survey. EO 75 directs all government instrumentalities to identify lands owned by the government devoted or suitable for agricultural purposes for distribution to identified qualified beneficiaries. Camp Keithley is a former United States military base built during the start of the Philippine American War in the early part of the 20th century. On December 23, 1953, former President Elpidio Quirino, by virtue of Presidential Proclamation No. 453, converted the 6,667-hectare area, now renamed Camp Amai Pakpak, into a military reserve.



DAR-Bicol set to distribute 101,377 hectares of agri land

Amidst the mounting pressures and complex problems in implementing the government's land reform program, the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) in Bicol region would pool all its effort to distribute the remaining balance of 101,377 hectares of agricultural land to landless farmers in the said region. DAR Bicol Regional Director Rodrigo O. Realubit said the department in this

region has a target scope of 442,895 hectares. Of this figure, a total of 341,518 hectares of agricultural land or 77.11% were already distributed throughout the region within a period of 49 years, or since the previous land reform law took effect in 1972. "However, the remaining area, which is the 101,377 hectares available for distribution were mostly privately

owned and more contentious," he said. Realubit divulged that the coming years would continue to be incredibly difficult for the department because 47,557 hectares and 17,238 hectares of the total balance are classified as "problematic" and "untitled properties," respectively, thereby delaying their coverage under the

Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP). Private lands also include those covered by the operation land transfer program, landed estates, and lands foreclosed by government financing institutions. He added that "these areas are still under protests or litigation and lack

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documents and could be touched only by DAR upon resolution of the case or completion of supporting records.”

The Regional Chief also said that only 504 hectares of government-owned lands remained untouched and most of it had been distributed in the past decades, which are located in Albay, Camarines Sur, Masbate, and Sorsogon provinces.

“In spite of all the said challenges, we will do our best to achieve a zero-backlog target in terms of land distribution,” he stressed.

In the agency’s accomplishment report, Realubit cited that of the

341,518 hectares of agricultural land distributed, the DAR has already issued about 150,083 emancipation patents (EPS) and certificates of landownership award (CLOAs) to 198,917 Bicolano farmers.

“This resulted from the persistent efforts of the department to provide security of land tenure to landless farmers despite the difficulties in implementing the CARP,” Realubit said.

By province, Camarines Sur came on top, with 125,654 hectares awarded to 74,125 agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs). It was followed by Masbate with 70,652 hectares and 34,146 ARBs; Albay with 56,381 hectares and 39,367

ARBs; Camarines Norte with 38,198 hectares and 17,844 ARBs; Sorsogon with 33,421 and 21,265 ARBs; and Catanduanes has already completed all its distributable agricultural lands of 14,666 hectares with 10,919 ARBs benefitting from its land distribution program.

Realubit shared that a total of 351 agrarian reform beneficiary organizations (ARBOs) have been organized regionwide to enable farmer-members to continue gaining access to a convergence of support services from various agrarian reform implementing agencies, donor communities, local government units, and non-government organizations.

“These support services include skills and livelihood training programs, access to credit, health, technology transfer, irrigation, multi-purpose buildings, food processing centers with tools and instruments, and farm machinery,” he added.

He said the DAR, through CARP, financed farm-to-market road and bridge construction projects of the Department of Public Works and Highways; credit programs of the Land Bank of the Philippines; skills training of the Department of Trade and Industry; irrigation projects of the National Irrigation Administration; and agri-production training and livestock distribution of the Department of Agriculture.

FEBRUARY 6



SSO TOPS IN 2021 PHYSICAL AND FINANCIAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF DAR

“Congratulations for a job well done,” thus said Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) Bernie F. Cruz as the Support Services Office (SSO) reported its achievement reflecting the highest percentage accomplishment for 2021 with 100% overall physical performance under the Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Development and Sustainability Program (ARBDSP) and 97.05% in financial targets.

Undersecretary for Support Services Office Emily O. Padilla said that despite the economic downturn in the past couple of years, due to national pandemic, limitation in the budget, and occurrence of natural calamities, SSO still managed to perform well.

“Our total budget allocation for the whole sector in 2021 was P741.528 million and our fund utilization is at 97%,” Padilla said.

As of year 2021, DAR-SSO was able to form 2,148 agrarian reform communities (ARCs) covering a total of 1,303 municipalities in 9,523 barangays. With these, DAR was able to encourage 1,475,354 agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) to join ARB organizations (ARBOs) which have a total of 7,257 for 2021.

Padilla said that the annual target of the SSO on the number of newly organized ARBOs is 1,000 ARBOs per year with 25,000 target members per year. Out of these targets, DAR-SSO was able to organize 1,079 new ARBOs with 30,415 new members as of 2021.

The Enhanced Partnership Against Hunger and Poverty (EPAHP), which is a partnership project of

the DAR with other government agencies, local government units, and private marketing institutions to market the products of the ARBs, has achieved a record high of P2.07 billion gross sales nationwide for 2021.

“The SSO Management is very grateful to all the men and women behind the success, and recognizes their dedication and hard work that definitely brought them to top performance level for this one-year period,” Padilla said.

She disclosed that true resiliency has been demonstrably seen among them which is actually exemplifying a new breed of government workers. For the year 2022, Padilla said that SSO is having a positive outlook even if their budget allocation was cut by 20 percent based on the 2021 level.

“We will sustain our momentum in implementing our program and projects efficiently and effectively to make this year as another banner of success will aggressively look for local funds to amend our remaining budget,” Padilla added.

She believes that being together in unselfishly serving the small farmer ARBs is the noblest purpose the office can ever give.

“Our office, the SSO still stands for service, sharing, and optimization,” Padilla stressed.

The DAR-SSO focuses on the continuous provision of support services projects, which include training, organizational development, credit assistance, and relevant and sustainable livelihood projects to the farmer beneficiaries.

FEBRUARY 7



DAR empowers Negros Oriental with bridge and livelihood projects

Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) Secretary Bernie F. Cruz visited yesterday, February 6, 2022, barangay Sto. Rosario in this town to see for himself how the farmers are doing after the DAR provided their community with a bridge project amounting to Php 24.8-million. Cruz said the 24.8-linear meter bridge, implemented through the Tulay ng Pangulo para sa Kaunlarang Pang-Agraryo, has provided the farmers, and even the residents, faster access and cheaper transportation expenses to bring their agricultural products to various trade centers and markets.

“I am very pleased that this project has made your lives easier. All I ask of you is to take care of this project so that the next generations will also benefit from this,” Cruz said.

Cruz added that the department would provide them with other technologies and capability training to upvalue their products, banana being the town’s major crop, to make it more competitive in the market.



Sta. Catalina Mayor Peve Obaniana-Ligan said that the DAR is helping them achieve their goal of making their town a successful one. “This is the first time that this community was visited by a Secretary. With the ardent support of the DAR we believe that we will realize our dreams in the near future,” she said.

Barangay Chairman Joey Nuico, on the other hand, related that their barangay used to be a very remote area and through the DAR’s continued support they now have a connection to different towns.

“Since I was younger, I witnessed the construction of farm to market roads so that we can go to other places without too much difficulty. And now this bridge has given us more convenience. Thank you to the department and we hope that DAR will not stop in helping us,” he said.

Prior to his visit in this town, Cruz had stopped over in the municipality of Siaton to inspect a DAR-assisted cooperative, the Bonbonon Farmers Agrarian Reform Multi-Purpose Cooperative.

“I’m happy to know that you are doing great and this cooperative has helped a lot of its farmer-members in their livelihood activities. I wish that all cooperatives would possess an attitude of teamwork and perseverance,” Cruz said.



DAR distributes 782 hectares of agri lands to 1,299 farmers in Negros Oriental

A total of 1,299 landless farmers in the province of Negros Oriental have all the reasons to celebrate the year after the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) distributed to them, on Monday, February 7, 2022, around 782 hectares of agricultural lands they have been longing to receive for many years.

DAR Secretary Bernie F. Cruz, who led the distribution ceremony, said this activity sets off a good start of the year for the farmers to make their lands more productive to boost their economic lives.

“We are here, with other top officials of the department, to join you in this moment of celebration. The lands you have been tilling for years are now officially yours. Take good care of your land titles because you can pass it on to the next generations of your family,” he said.

Cruz added that the DAR is doing its best to improve the agricultural sector in the countryside to lift the lives of the farmers, as well as, ensure the country’s food security. The lands distributed in South Negros

Oriental include properties in the town of Mabinay with 242.6841 hectares; Bayawan, 43.6656 has.; Tanjay, 24.8265 has.; La Libertad, 22 has.; Sta. Catalina, 15.9533 has.; Pamplona, 14.7992 has.; and Amlan, 4.18 has.

In North Negros Oriental, Guihulngan City, DAR has distributed 343.7355 hectares, while Canlaon City with 70.1861 has.

Alejandro Didal, one of the land recipients from Guihulngan City, said that the land they receive is a morale booster to them because it shows that the government is true to its promise in helping the poor farmers.

“Thank you very much to the DAR. Owning the lands we have been dreaming of means a lot to our lives,” he said.

OIC-Central Visayas Regional Director Romeo Reyes told the agrarian reform beneficiaries that the department’s help to them would not stop in land distribution but rather would assist them to enrich their lands through the provision of various support services.

DAR SETTLES AGRARIAN DISPUTES IN BOHOL



The Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) in the province of Bohol recently conducted mediation, free legal consultation, counseling, and legal assistance to the agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) in the town of Guindulman, Jagna, and Carmen.

“The activity is part of the Agrarian Reform Justice on Wheels (ARJOW) of the Legal Affairs Office (LAO). We have conducted a mediation conference in the town of Guindulman, 82 km from Tagbilaran City,” Provincial Agrarian Reform Program Officer II Ronald I. Pumatong said.

He said ARJOW is a program where DAR lawyers and legal experts personally visit various communities in the countryside to bring the agrarian service closer to the public through free mobile legal clinics.

Pumatong disclosed that one particular case handled by Legal Officers Atty. Janry Niño Santiago and Merly Diez Bantugan in Guindulman, Bohol was the settlement of an agrarian conflict between siblings Francisco Piquero, the complainant and respondents Filadelfa Piquero Utrera, and their cousins Urbano and Flaviano Piquero who all wanted to claim ownership of the 2,000 square meter property of their deceased aunt-CLOA (certificate of land ownership award) holder Macaria Piquero Bagtasos. Fortunately, Bagtasos have no children or other relatives as possible inheritors of the land. The mediation conference proceeded peacefully with the said property transferred equally to the complainant and respondents.

Pumatong said that another mediation was also conducted in Jagna town and free legal consultations, counseling, and legal services in Carmen to help the ARBs in the communities resolve their problems, issues, and concerns involving lands and other agrarian reform-related cases.

ARJOW is part of the “zero backlog” case policy initiated by the DAR-LAO to provide social justice to the farmers in the countryside.

Agrarian Justice Delivery (AJD) is one of the three program components and objectives of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) implemented by the DAR, which aims to provide legal support to ARBs in the course of agrarian disputes through alternative dispute resolution such as mediation, and questions in the identification and selection of farmer-beneficiaries, among others.



DAR distributes 4,728 has. agri lands in Negros Occidental

As the government continues to help the people in this province to return to their normal lives after the devastating damages left by Super Typhoon Odette last December, the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), on Tuesday, February 8, 2022, distributed 4,728.67 hectares of agricultural lands to 4,754 landless farmers.

DAR Secretary Bernie F. Cruz said he hopes that the lands awarded to the farmers would serve as a new beginning towards a brighter future for them and the next generations to come.

“We are very happy that we’re able to finally award these lands. Our

people in the department encountered many challenges upon processing these lands so that we could give these properties to the farmers in accordance with the law,” Cruz said.

About 3,033.71 hectares of land were awarded to 2,830 agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) from the southern part of the province. These cities and municipalities include Bago City, Binalabagan, Cauayan, Himamaylan City, Hinigaran, Ilog, Isabela, La Castellana, Moises Padilla, Pontevedra and Sipalay City. In the northern part, 1,694.96 hectares were distributed to 1,924 ARBs from the cities and towns of Bacolod City, Cadiz City, Calatrava, DS Benedicto,

EB Magalona, Escalante City, Manapla, Murcia, Sagay City, San Carlos City, Silay City, Talisay City, Toboso and Victorias City.

Due to restrictions of the local government of Sinalay, only 70 ARBs were invited to represent the 4,754 farmer recipients.

Western Visayas Regional Director Shiela Enciso divulged that this event was given a theme as, “Build, Back, Better!” in connection with the calamities that hit them last December.

“This momentous event will help you rise up again with better opportunities coming your way because the DAR would continue to help you improve

your economic lives through the provisions of various support services,” she said.

Support services are provided in the form of infrastructure facilities, farm machinery, equipment and inputs, capability training, and other livelihood opportunities, among others.

Albino Bombio Jr, farmer-recipient from Victorias City, shared that farming is what he does throughout his life. But he was also a dreamer.

“One of my dreams is to own the land that I was tilling. Because of the DAR, my dreams came true and I promise that I will make this land as richer as ever,” he said.



Zambo Sibugay rubber tree farmers get farm inputs from DAR to boost their production

Four (4) agrarian reform beneficiaries organizations (ARBOs) in the province of Zamboanga Sibugay, engaged in rubber tree farming, received bags and sacks of fertilizers and herbicides, amounting to Php2,815,400.00 to boost their production.

The recipient ARBOs include Timbabauan Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Organization (TIMARBENCO) in Timbabauan, Tungawan; Silingan Rubber Farmers Association (SIRFA) in Silingan, R.T Lim; Tambanan Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Organization (TARBENCO) in Tambanan, Naga and Goodyear Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Multi-Purpose Cooperative (GARBEMCO) in Goodyear, Kabasalan.

In a statement, Provincial Agrarian Reform Program Officer II Mohammad Dassan Adju said the fertilizers and herbicides would spur rubber production in the province.

“The DAR is not just about giving lands to landless farmers, we also provide support services to uplift the economic lives of our agrarian reform beneficiaries,” he said.

Adju added that the fertilizers and herbicides they receive would be a big help to increase the quantity and quality of their products.

The farm inputs, provided under Project ConVERGE (Convergence on Value Chain Enhancement for Rural Growth and Empowerment), were directly delivered to the ARBO’s respective warehouses under the supervision of DAR provincial office personnel.

Project ConVERGE is funded under the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and aims to boost the rural economy and reduce poverty in rural areas by empowering agribusiness enterprises and catalyzing market opportunities.

DAR SUSTAINS ZERO BACKLOG CAMPAIGN IN CENTRAL LUZON

The Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) recognized the field offices for sustaining the zero backlog’ campaign as part of the operational directives of the current administration.

During the three-day DAR year-end summative assessment and 2022 direction-setting conference for the Luzon group held in Mabalacat, Pampanga, Bureau of Agrarian Legal Assistance (BALA) Director Atty. Marjorie P. Ayson reported the performance review of the Legal Sector on the various activity indicators.

In the said presentation, Ayson announced recognition to the top-performing regions based on the caseload and rate of resolutions submitted by the regional offices during the sectoral assessment and validation attended by the regional and provincial Chief Legal Assistance Division.

The different performance categories recognized are as follows: For Luzon Group – Batch 2, the top three performers across all indicators nationwide ranking includes Region 3 (rank 1), Region 4A (rank 3), and Region 2 and CAR (rank 7).

The top performers on agrarian law implementation (ALI) cases resolved in terms of volume of cases are Region 3 resolving 3,185 cases (rank 2) and CAR resolving 2,060 cases (rank 7).

In quasi-judicial cases, the top performers in representation are Region 3 with 2,052 representation submitted for resolution (rank 3) and Region 2 with 1,132 representation submitted for resolution (rank 7).

Atty. Ayson acknowledged the full support and administrative supervision of all regional and provincial Chief Legal Assistance Division for the year 2021, which she solicited for the same support for the year 2022.

DAR TO TRANSFORM SUBSISTENCE FARMING TO COMMERCIAL PRODUCTION



The Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) is set to deliver a more responsive and integrated package of support services to agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) and their organizations to make their lands productive and provide them with livelihood opportunities.

DAR Secretary Bernie F. Cruz emphasized this as he sets the 2022 direction of the DAR, stating that the agency must continually help the ARBs in resolving their agrarian-related cases, distribute lands and move on with the provision of support services.

”Let us help our farmers resolve their cases and implement the program. Aside from the Field Operations and Legal Affairs, the Support Services Office will play a vital role in the next phase of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP),” Cruz said.

Cruz emphasized that there is a need to consolidate agricultural production without consolidating the lands. He said that this can be done by providing development support to enable the farmers to produce market-competitive products through value addition, competently managing and operating their enterprises and livelihood activities.

“Let us help our farmers turn from

subsistence farming to commercial production. There should be value-adding, where the farmers will not only focus on selling their raw materials to the wet market but also directly deliver their processed or vacuum-packed products to the end-user,” he said.

He specifically mentioned Caraga region’s Project Convergence on Value Chain Enhancement for Rural Growth and Empowerment (Project ConVERGE) funded by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

Included among the components of Project Convergence is the linking of smallholder farmers to the existing value-chain system through the development of selected crops resulting in improved farm income, provision of equipment, facilities, and infrastructure, and subdivision of certificates of land ownership award (CLOA) to stabilize ownership and property rights in the project areas

“The project’s aim is to increase the income and improve the way of living of the farmers by boosting their production through farmer’s training, product processing, and packaging and linking farmers to various markets,” he said.

Farmers org’s in Caraga region get ₱416-M agri product sales in 2021

Agrarian reform beneficiaries organizations (ARBOs) in Caraga Region tops in the nationwide marketing sales performance as it posted a whopping total of ₱416 million in sales realized for 2021 for its various agricultural products.

DAR-Caraga Regional Director Leomides R. Villareal said that its 452 ARBOs involving 92,830 agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) in 127 agrarian reform communities (ARCs) reached a combined total of ₱416,395,037.88 in 2021 sales.

Villareal said the total sales of ARBOs were made possible because of DAR’s facilitation through



its various projects, which include the Linking Smallholder Farmers to Market with Microfinance (LinkSFarMM) and Enhanced Partnership Against Hunger and Poverty (EPAHP), among others.

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The DAR earlier reported a grand total of ₱2,007,915,2754.30 nationwide 2021 marketing sales of its ARBOs, 43% of which, amounting to ₱864,967,103.15 was contributed by the whole Mindanao group, with the Caraga region accomplishment representing 20.74% out of the nationwide total sales.

“DAR linked the ARBOs through the institutional markets like

the Department of Education, Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Jail Management and Penology, private institutional buyers like Kennemer, Inc, Filipinas Palm Oil Corporation, local government units, for its sales of milled rice, cacao, palm oil, and rubber, among others,” Villareal said.

Aside from providing support services, DAR Caraga also trained the farmers through the said projects

including the Village-Level Farm Enterprise Development (VLFED), Farm Business School (FBS), Farm Productivity Enhancement Projects, and through other credit assistance projects.

Villareal expressed thanks to his regional staff and the DAR central office, the support given by Secretary Bernie F. Cruz, and the relentless efforts of Support Services Office Undersecretary

Emily Padilla for facilitating the delivery of the ARBOs’ support needs.

“We will do more for our farmer-clients in the coming years,” Villareal said while proudly announcing that DAR-Caraga Region finished all its targets on support services delivery programs intended for ARBs and ARBOs even before 2021 ended.

FEBRUARY 13

DAR TURNS OVER P10.9-M MANGA BRIDGE IN SOUTH COTABATO

The Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) in this province has turned over a Php 10.9-million bridge project in Purok Manga, Barangay San Jose, to provide its farmers and other residents better, cheaper and safer access to cross over to their destinations.

The Manga bridge project was implemented under the Tulay ng Pangulo para sa Kaunlarang Pang-agrario (TPKP) in partnership with the Department of Public Works and Highways-XII and the local government of Norala.

The said bridge has a length of 22.8 linear meters and it connects the barangays of Lapuz, Matagol, and Liberty. About 6,000 residents of the Barangay San Jose would benefit from the said project.

DAR-Socscsargen Assistant Regional Director Roldan Ali said this bridge would help the farmers deliver their agricultural products faster, safer, and even cheaper transportation expenses, to various trade centers and markets.

“I admire the strong partnership of the stakeholders and I believe that the beneficiaries of this bridge would do their part in strictly maintaining the very good condition of the bridge,” he said.

A certificate of turn-over and acceptance was ceremonially signed by the recipient and partner agencies, which serves as proof that the ownership and responsibility of the project have been officially conveyed to the recipients.

Norala Mayor Clemente Fedoc thanked the DAR for the bridge project and committed that he would continually support and help the department in addressing the needs of the farmers and his constituents.

Salvador Floro Punong Barangay of San Jose also expressed his gratitude to the government and assured the department that he would lead his people in taking care of the project.

FEBRUARY 14

PHP 9-MILLION WORTH BRIDGE AND FARM MACHINERY, DAR’S EXPRESSION OF LOVE TO NUEVA ECIIJA FARMERS



Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) Secretary Bernie F. Cruz personally turned over a bridge in barangay Sta. Ana, Guimba, and farm machinery in the town of Gapan, all located in this province, the rice capital of Central Luzon, with a total project cost of Php9 million as its expression of love to the farmers in the province.

The Php7.9 million worth bridge is being implemented under the Tulay ng Pangulo para sa Kaunlarang Pang-Agraryo (TPKP) to provide the farmers with easier access to transport their products to the market.

Cruz said the bridge’s material is imported from France and its steel could be as durable as the Eiffel tower.

“The project is in response to the farmers’ request to provide them with an easier way to cross the river in transporting their agricultural products to the nearest market,” Cruz said.

DAR Central Luzon Regional Director James Arsenio Ponce said the new and better Bonsobre bridge will be a lasting legacy of the DAR, the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), the barangay local government unit (LGU) of Sta. Ana, municipal LGU of Guimba and the province of Nueva Ecija that will serve the agrarian reform community (ARC) of the province and the general public.

“The double-lane Bonsobre bridge will now bring greater comfort to the 128 agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs), 273 households and over 1,000 residents of barangay Sta. Ana alone. It will not only help farmers deliver produce to the market but will also mean enhanced mobility to the general public,” Ponce said.

Guimba Municipal Administrator Jose Francis Stevens M. Dizon expressed his gratitude to the DAR for the opportunity given to his town to receive such a valuable project.

He disclosed that the previous one-lane, steel bridge with wooden plank already posed a risk to the residents and commuters because of its poor condition.

“Finally, after more than thirteen (13) years, the construction of a 28.80 linear meter and double-lane bridge which began in June 2021 is now finally completed,” Provincial Agrarian Reform Program Officer II Eden B. Ponio said.

Ponio said that prior to the implementation of the project, barangay Sta. Ana regularly maintained the old bridge by pinning the loosened wooden planks, bolting the steel joints and fastening the necessary braces to strengthen it just to ensure the safety of the commuters.

“The residents in the area, especially the farmers, can now deliver their farm products easier by passing by the new bridge,” she said.

ARB Rolando Limon expressed his gratitude to the construction of the bridge which will link their barangay to other neighboring villages and reduce travel time, cost, and effort.

“Farmers had difficulty transporting their produce, making them vulnerable to the additional costs of hauling and possible spoilage of products because heavy trucks of buyers were refused access to the old bridge,” he said.



DAR Undersecretary for Foreign Assisted and Special Project Office (FASPO) Virginia N. Orogo, expressed her gratitude for the support provided by the partner-agencies in carrying out the project.

Aside from the bridge project, under the Climate Resilient Farm Productivity Support Project (CRFPSP), two (2) agrarian reform beneficiaries’ organizations (ARBOs) namely Tupad Pangarap MPC of Barangay Mabunga, Gapan City and San Antonio Weste RIC based in Barangay San Antonio Weste, Lupao, Nueva Ecija, each received one brand new 4-wheel drive, 40-HP farm tractor with rotavator and 1-ton capacity trailer worth Php1-million.

DAR South Cotabato supports food security through the distribution of farm inputs

To ensure the country's food sufficiency, the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) in the province of South Cotabato recently distributed vegetable seeds and other farm implements to the members of Puti Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Association in Barangay Puti, Norala, South Cotabato. DAR Soccsksargen Regional Director Marion Abella said the department distributes farm inputs as part of the starter kit for vegetable production under the Buhay sa

Guay project. "Buhay sa Guay project is the department's initiative to help the country sustain its food sources by promoting urban gardening to rural areas to help bolster the productivity of vegetable supply in the countryside," he said. Abella said the DAR distributed seeds such as eggplant, pole string beans, green pepper, among others, as well as fertilizer and farm implements like wheelbarrows, e-knapsack sprayers, which were implemented through the Climate Resilient Farm Productivity Support Project (CRFPSP). CRFPSP aims to support the farmers' production, processing, and marketing activities to increase their household income. Chief Agrarian Reform Program Officer Lorna Garde encouraged the beneficiaries to take good care of the implements they have received and challenged them to sustain and make the seeds productive.

"It would take three to four months before the farmers harvest their vegetables. In a few months this vegetable production could add to the community's food sources and would also provide additional income to agrarian reform beneficiaries and their respective household," she said. She also added that the department will assist them in marketing their product through strong market linkage and tie-up with other potential buyers.

21 DAR-Soccsksargen employees take oath of office

Beaming with excitement and a sense of fulfillment, five newly promoted and 16 newly hired employees of the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) in Region XII recently took their oath before Regional Director Marion Abella, pledging to do their best as civil servants. Human resource and promotions board chairman, H. Roldan Ali said that the newly hired and promoted personnel were thoroughly deliberated and chosen by the board after besting other applicants for the positions of Agrarian Reform Program Technologist, Agrarian Reform Program Officer I, and Administrative Aide VI in the provinces of Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, and South Cotabato.



namely: land tenure improvement, support services, and agrarian justice delivery, to ensure that the best service is given to our clients and stakeholders," said Abella. He urged all the oath takers to give their best in the exigency of the service and prove to God and country that they deserve the positions they were appointed to. Emmanuel Nicart, newly promoted Agrarian Reform Program Officer I from DAR-Sultan Kudarat expressed elation over his promotion and said that he will give his utmost to perform to the best of his abilities, all duties, and tasks assigned to him. Also present at the ceremony were DAR Assistant Regional Director Mariannie Baunto, Provincial Agrarian Reform Program Officers Rodolfo Albuero, Evangeline Bueno, Mary Jane Aguilar, and Pinky Ponte.

In his message, Abella congratulated the newly hired and promoted employees and urged them to perform their duties and responsibilities

with dedication and commitment of the agrarian reform program. to serve not just the agrarian reform beneficiaries, but also the landowners and other stakeholders components of the department,

LUZON DAR ADJUDICATION BOARD ACCOUNTS FOR 40.48% NATIONWIDE RESOLUTION OF AGRARIAN-RELATED CASES

The Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) in Luzon area and MIMAROPA assumed a substantial share of 40.48% from the overall 22,452 cases, Central Luzon 3,637 cases, Calabarzon has accomplished 99.88% with 840 cases and Bicol nationwide accomplishment of region with 99.74% with 1,172 the DAR Adjudication Board resolved cases.



DARAB Executive Director Atty. Roland C. Manalaysay recognized the following regions in Luzon which has resolved 100% of its cases, which include Cordillera Administrative Region resolving 841 cases, Ilocos region resolving 700 cases, Cagayan Valley 1,228

of the facilitating factors and strategies for Luzon group; namely, motivations to sustain the gains of zero backlog thrust, now going to zero caseload, full administrative support from the Regional Directors and Provincial Agrarian Reform Program Officers, filling-up of plantilla items and permissible hiring of additional Contract of Services personnel. "The conduct of virtual conferences and hearings and personal mode of service of orders, decision and resolution thru the sheriff, available rules for electronic transmission mode of service, strict adherence with the 2021 DARAB Rules of Procedures and compliance with the mandatory Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) processes also helps facilitates the speedy resolution of cases," he added. Manalaysay highlighted more

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DAR TO START AWARDING MARAWI'S CAMP KEITHLEY TO LANDLESS FARMERS IN MARCH

A portion of Camp Keithley, a military reservation in Marawi, Lanao del Sur, will be distributed to agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP). "They have waited long enough. This land is part of their ancestral domain. It should be returned to them. Let us do our best to distribute these lands to them this March," said Agrarian Reform (DAR) Secretary Bernie Cruz at the agency's 2021 year-end assessment and 2022 direction setting held here. Cruz said the distribution of idle government-owned lands (GOLs) like in Marawi is a top priority in accordance with President Rodrigo Roa Duterte's directive under Executive Order No. 75, series of 2019. "The President believes that there were historical injustices inflicted against the

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Bangsamoro people, jeopardizing their legitimate birthright over their ancestral lands. And it is just right to indemnify them by distributing all government-owned lands to the rightful claimant to correct the historical offenses,” Cruz said.

The Secretary instructed the DAR Field Operations Office and its Northern Mindanao regional office to immediately complete the survey activities on Camp Keithley in Marawi City, identify those who will be affected, and distribute the lands to the identified agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) in the area.

DAR-Northern Mindanao regional director Zoraida Macadindang in her progress report said that the DAR has been working very hard amid the threat of the pandemic. Issues in the coverage of Camp Keithley military reservation are also being resolved including the resistance of the potential ARBs/applicants in Barangay Alinun, Saguiaran to conduct the survey and delay in the conduct of subdivision survey due to the absence of potential ARBs/applicants at the time of the survey. “But in spite of all these challenges, we are now 70 percent done with identifying the landholdings for distribution, perimeter surveying, procurement activities and validation, documentation, and approval of subdivision plans,” Macadindang said.

“We can now start distributing lands this coming March starting with around 200 hectares and will follow it up with succeeding land distributions in the next months as we finish up working on the rest of the military reservation,” explained Macadindang.

On October 2021, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana turned over the deed of transfer of a portion of government-owned Camp Keithley military reservation to the DAR.

Under the CARP, the military reservation will be distributed to identified Marawi farmers.

This military reservation is composed of 6,667 hectares and based on EO 75 and after the initial survey of DAR, 4,000 hectares of land will be distributed to the qualified beneficiaries in Marawi, Marantao, Piapago, and Saguiaran towns in Lanao del Sur.

Camp Keithley is a former military base of the United States of America that was built during the start of the Philippine-American War in the early part of the 20th century. By virtue of Presidential Proclamation No. 453 of former President Elpidio Quirino, the 6,667-hectare area was converted into a military reserve on December 23, 1953.

36 Bicol farmers' orgs get P1.5-M worth of portable drying equipment

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FARMERS' COOPERATIVE IN ALBAY THRIVE THROUGH DAR'S MICROFINANCE PROGRAM, BUILDS PILI AND MEAT PROCESSING CENTER

The combined efforts of government institutions led by the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), and Land Bank of the Philippines (LANDBANK) have helped uplift the lives of rice farmers here through its successful relending services for crop production.

Susan Requiero, general manager of the Quipia Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Association Cooperative (QARBC), said the collaboration among different government agencies was instrumental in extending assistance to their 121 members.

“Cabrarán Grande in Jovellar, Albay is a distant highland barangay. And because it is far from the city, our farming community is not accessible to financial services. We were totally reliant on informal lenders to fund our agricultural production,” said Requiero.

This prompted them to organize a group of 32 farmers from their village. In June 2011, with support and assistance from the DAR, Requiero established the Quipia Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Association Cooperative (QARBC), with her acting as its general manager.

A few years later, as the co-op's members kept growing, QARBC asked DAR for help through the Agrarian Production Credit Program (APCP) to finance their relending services for crop production and expand to other businesses.

In August 2016, DAR helped the cooperative establish its microfinance program to complement ongoing interventions

and minimize the existing credit gaps. The cooperative, with a starting capital of P100,000, offered production loans from P5,000 to P20,000 with revolving credit terms to its members at a lower interest rate of three percent per month.

With 139 regular borrowers, QARBC's microfinance program income has now surpassed P500,000. Their assets were only worth P12,540 when they started. However, it has grown dramatically in less than 10 years, reaching P967,195 as of December 2020.

According to Requiero, the remarkable growth in QARBC's assets and income has been heavily attributed to the active member's involvement in its operations.

“Our officers have had a great relationship with the members for the last 10 years. We saw our partnership progress,” Requiero said.

“Gaining the members' trust proved to be a challenge at the beginning because most of the cooperatives they knew did not prosper, but we persisted. Everyone had reservations, but we overcame them with our transparency. We fostered a trusting mindset among our members,” she said.

Today, QARBC has 121 farmer-members in their area and from the neighboring barangays of San Vicente, San Roque, Maogog, Villapaz, White Deer, and San Isidro. The cooperative has also expanded its business. It now runs a farm input dealership and rents out post-harvest equipment like hand tractors, threshers, mechanical

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transplanters, and reapers.

With earnings from their microfinance program, the cooperative was able to fund their machinery shed, which cost P150,000, and contributed P80,000 as their counterpart for the construction of the pili nut and meat processing center.

DAR provided the said facility through a Village Level Farm Focused Enterprise Development (VLFED) project amounting to P570,000.

QARBC also prioritizes continuous education by encouraging its members to take advantage of technical skills and capacity-building training offered by the DAR to achieve self-reliance and market competitiveness.

“We are far from the town proper, but DAR can still reach us with their services. And we are happy that we can contribute to our community, generate jobs, and help enrich the lives of our farmer-members. Until now, DAR has been providing us with moral and other support projects to achieve all these feats. They never fail to guide us in managing our organization. Their support is what keeps us going,” Requiero added.

The APCP is a joint program of DAR and LANDBANK, which aims to achieve sustainable crop production and increase the income of agrarian reform beneficiaries and their households through the provision of credit and capacity-building assistance.

Tulay ng Pangulo creates road networks for farmers in 2021

The Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), through its Foreign Assisted and Special Projects Office (FASPO), has constructed 107 bridges in the countryside for 2021.

DAR Secretary Bernie Cruz said that out of the targeted 186 bridges for 2021, the DAR was able to facilitate the construction of 107 bridges nationwide through the FASPO.

“We didn’t stop implementing [the project], but the pandemic slowed us down with the construction of these bridges. At present, there are 49 ongoing bridge construction, 30 in the pre-construction stage, and 22 additional bridges for construction in the countryside this year,” Cruz said at the agency’s 2021 year-end assessment and 2022 direction setting held here.

The construction of the bridges was made possible under the Tulay ng Pangulo Para sa Kaunlarang Pang-Agraryo (TPKP project), funded by France, monitored by DAR, and implemented by Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH).

Cruz said the TPKP project plays a vital role in uplifting the standards of living of farmer-beneficiaries in the province as it enables them to transport their harvests from their farms to the market with ease.

“We are very proud to have a project such as

this for it helps enhance the economic life of our farmer-beneficiaries,” he said.

Cruz said the TPKP is based on the criteria that it must be implemented in an agrarian reform community (ARC), with no existing roads on both sides, must have 28 linear meters from bank to bank, and must be implemented in a municipal road.

In her progress report, DAR Undersecretary Virginia Orogo said the bridge project that links the road network within the ARC barangays has led to the improvement of the economic welfare of thousands of agrarian reform beneficiaries in farming communities nationwide.

She said the 107 bridges constructed nationwide are now contributing to the provinces’ economic development.

“Before the construction of these bridges, most farmers and residents had to cross rivers, muddy roads, flooded roads, or go around a longer route to avoid these obstacles. Thanks to TPKP, crops, and agri-products from all over have found easier access to the primary consumer market in provinces, it even reaches markets in Manila. Tools and materials and other needs of the farmers and their communities can now easily be transported,” Orogo said.

DAR FACILITATES MARKETING AGREEMENTS BETWEEN BJMP AND FARMERS IN ZAMBO SIBUGAY

In its continuous effort to strengthen the government’s war against hunger in the province of Zamboanga Sibugay, the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) provincial office facilitated recently the signing of marketing agreements between the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) District Jail and two (2) DAR-assisted cooperatives, namely, the Silingan Rubber Farmers Association (SIRFA) and Mate Women’s Association.

Provincial Agrarian Reform Program Officer II (PARPO) Mohammad Dassan Adju said these agreements offer mutual benefits to both parties as the BJMP District Jail would be assured of a steady supply of fresh vegetables for the dietary requirements of the persons deprived of liberty (PDLs) in their facility while the two agrarian reform beneficiaries organizations (ARBOs) would also have a regular market for their farm produce.

Aside from vegetables and root crops, Mate Women’s Association will also provide coco-vinegar to BJMP District Jail.

“The marketing agreement was made possible through the effective implementation of the Enhanced Partnership Against Hunger and Poverty (EPAHP) Program. The BJMP gets a supply of fresh foods at a reasonable price while our ARBOs would sell their products directly to an institutional market, which make their earnings bigger than when they get help from other parties or traders,” Adju said.

Adju added that the BJMP District Jail is one of the strong partners of DAR in supporting ARBOs in the province under the EPAHP program. EPAHP is one of the banner programs of the government created under Executive Order No. 101 whose objective is to mitigate hunger, ensure food nutrition security and establish sustainable agriculture.

The marketing agreements, held at the BJMP District Jail Office, in the town of Ipil, were sealed by BJMP District Jail Warden JINSP Arvin Dan R Aguito and the chairpersons of the ARBOs Mr. Charlie Divinagracia and Ms. Crisminda R. Tomarong of SIRFA and Mate Women’s Association, respectively.

Joining Provincial Head PARPO II Adju, in facilitating the event are PARPO I Lorna Salera, Municipal Agrarian Reform Program Officers Ana Maria Calonia and Nicolas Pameron, Jr., Division Chief Anthony Teves and other DAR personnel.

DAR set to turn-over P32 million-worth Tulay ng Pangulo in Nueva Vizcaya



The Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) has conducted its initial inspection on the recently completed Wacal Bridge project worth P32 million in Solano, Nueva Vizcaya, which is being implemented under the Tulay ng Pangulo para sa Kaunlarang Pang-Agraryo (TPKP) and is intended to provide the farmers with easier access to transport their products to the market.

Provincial Agrarian Reform Program Officer II Engr. Rustico Turingan said the project is funded by the DAR under the TPKP project in partnership with the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and the local government of Solano.

“The P32- million steel bridge has a 22.4 lineal meters and 7-meter wide span and has a capacity of 20 tons that can accommodate all types of vehicles,” he said.

He disclosed that the bridge will benefit more than 4,500 residents including agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) in Uddiawan agrarian reform community (ARC) and neighboring barangays.

“The bridge is intended to ease the transportation of the farmers’ products from their farms to the market so that they would be able to sell them at a fair price and increase their income,” Turingan said.

Turingan disclosed that the construction of the steel bridge started in October 2021 and was completed this year. The official turnover of the bridge to the local government of Solano will immediately follow after the final inspection to be conducted by the DPWH.

The project is being monitored by the DAR under the Foreign Assisted and Special Projects Office (FASPO) headed by Undersecretary Virginia N. Orogo.

ARBs expressed their excitement over the construction of the bridge to link the barangay to other neighboring villages and reduce travel time, cost, and effort.

The TPKP project involves the construction, installation, and establishment of “universal bridges” in priority ARCs which will serve as their road networks to main markets.

DAR launches urban vegetable gardening in Zambo Norte

The Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) in the province of Zamboanga del Norte recently launched “Buhay sa Gulay” project, an urban vegetable gardening program aimed to reduce poverty and eradicate hunger, particularly in marginalized urban barangays.

Provincial Agrarian Reform Program Officer II (PARPO) Rizzel Villanueva said the project is implemented under the agency’s Farm Business School (FBS), a program for farmers to effectively manage their farm produce and optimize their profitability.

“Sipaon Agrarian Reform Farmers Association (SARFA) received starter kits from DAR, as they are the chosen group in this province to receive the said aid,” Villanueva said.



The starter kits include one (1) electric water pump, two (2) knapsack sprayers, two (2) bluewater barrels, two (2) garden hoses, four (4) plastic sprinklers, and six (6) bolos. Varieties of vegetable seeds were also supplied to them.

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Continuation from page 9

“We hope that by launching this project, the SARFA, which is located in Sipaon, Rizal, will expand into Sipaon Agrarian Reform Farmers Cooperative (SARFCO) in the near future, as almost all big businesses begin as a small group,” Villanueva said. Meanwhile, PARPO I Alfonso Tan challenged the SARFA members to put into practice what they have learned from FBS, in order for their crops to grow well and farms to flourish.

The activity was attended by Mayor Fiona Marie Manigsaca, Municipal Agrarian Reform Program Officer Angela Patac, SARFA President Lope Culanag, and DAR and SARFA officials.

FEBRUARY 22

DAR PARCELIZES 175-T HAS. AGRI LANDS, BENEFITS 112,783 ARBS



The Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) has subdivided 174,798.86 hectares of agricultural lands to 112,783 agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) through the implementation of Project SPLIT or Support to Parcelization of Lands for Individual Titling.

Through the Project SPLIT, lands distributed under collective Certificates of Land Ownership Award (CCLOAs), were subdivided and ARBs who were previously awarded with lands under collective ownership would be issued individual land titles.

SPLIT National Project Director and DAR Assistant Secretary Rene Colocar said that out of the almost 175 thousand hectares, a total of 94,518.06 has. were accomplished by Regions 1, 8, and 9; the pilot regions in the implementation of the project.

“The other regions have accomplished a total of 80,280.80 hectares, and we believe that they would follow these pilot regions after this event,” Colocar said during the ‘Operations Problem Solving Workshop cum Policy Formulation Conference’ on Monday, February 21, held in Cebu City.

Colocar stressed that this event would serve as a venue for discussions of issues and concerns they encountered and formulate policy for more effective and expeditious implementation of subdividing the lands.

“We need to define and establish clear basic operations so that we can go forward through smooth implementation of the project,” he added.

The SPLIT project, implemented in 78 provinces, in 15 regions, started in November 2020 and would end in the year 2024.

Foreign Assisted and Special Projects Office Undersecretary Virginia Orogo said that this project would correct the mistakes of the past administrations.

“Collective ownership does not protect the property rights of our farmers because they do not have their own titles of their lands,” Orogo said.

She, however, added that there are many problems and oppositions in validating the lands. “I am very optimistic that at the end of our activity, we would all come up with established resolutions to the problems that we would encounter in the implementation of the project,” Orogo said.

The event, which will conclude on February 24, is being attended by SPLIT implementers nationwide.

FEBRUARY 23

Farmer’s org in Cavite develops 1,000 sq. m. lot for urban vegetable farming



A board member of a newly organized agrarian He disclosed that as per agreement by the coop reform beneficiary organization (ARBO) in members, the harvested crops will be sold by the Cavite, the Brgy. Malainen Old Blessed Farmers cooperative with the five (5) percent of the sales Assoc., Inc. has allowed the use of his 1,000 to serve as income of the cooperative, then the square meter lot to be developed under the urban remaining sales to be divided among the members vegetable farming project of the Department of as their additional income for their families.

Agrarian Reform (DAR) to provide additional Dubongco added that he is looking forward that income to its fifty-five (55) farmer-members and the majority of the urban areas in Cavite would be contribute for the nutritious and sufficient food implementing the project because it would open supply to its residents and neighboring areas. the eyes of the people to the importance of farming Dubbed as “Buhay sa Gulay,” the project in the community.

primarily aims to promote the importance of Dubongco commended the five (5) farmer scientists urban farming and empower urban dwellers to from Cavite, namely: Danilo Arnes, chairperson of Tres Cruces ARBs Farmers Association Inc.

in Tanza; Joselito Tibayan, Allan Tibayan of Provincial Agrarian Reform Program Officer II the Palangue Agrarian Reform Cooperative in James Arthur T. Dubongco said Artenio Marges, Naic; Mario Profeta of Tres Cruces Agrarian one of the board of trustees of the ARBO, has Reform Beneficiaries Farmers Association and allowed the use of his 1,000 square meters lot for Teresita Villanueva of Barangay Bunga Farmers the said program.

Association in Tanza for voluntarily sharing their “The land will be planted with various crops such proven farming techniques and extending their as pechay, Chinese kangkong and mustard,” he technical know-how to develop the said 1,000 square meter lot for the “Buhay sa Gulay” project.

FEBRUARY 24

DAR FARMER-BENEFICIARIES TO BENEFIT FROM CEBU’S ENHANCED COUNTRYSIDE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM



Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) Secretary Bernie F. Cruz yesterday, February 23, met with Cebu Governor Gwendolyn Garcia at the Provincial Capitol, to discuss the Enhanced Countryside Development (ECD), the province’s program to ramp up food production to attain its food sufficiency.

The DAR and the government of Cebu forged an agreement last December 2021 to provide support to the agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) such as financial assistance, access to agricultural technology, capacity building training, market linkages, and infrastructure

facilities. Garcia said food sufficiency requires viable financing support, as well as, the involvement and cooperation of farmers in the food production activities.

“Because of this we would distribute certificates of commitment to our ARBs on March 30 so that they would benefit from the assistance we would provide,” she said.

Garcia said the ECD program would have a great impact on the productivity of the lands awarded by DAR to the farmers. Cruz said that for the DAR’s part, would identify the ARBs that would initially receive the

support from the program. “We have about 31,590 ARBs in this province and we will select who are qualified and deserving farmers to receive the assistance,” he said.

Cruz divulged that around 35,544 hectares of land are occupied by these ARBs and the ECD program’s success in boosting the province’s food production is tantamount to the farmers’ improvement in their economic lives.

The ARBs in Cebu are organized into approximately 107 agrarian reform beneficiaries’ organizations.

Cruz encourages SPLIT implementers to speed up parcelization of lands

Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) Secretary Bernie F. Cruz commended the implementers of Project SPLIT or Support to Parcelization of Lands for Individual Titling for their successful activity dubbed as “Operations Problem Solving Workshop cum Policy Formulation Conference,” an avenue for the discussion of issues and concerns they encountered, as well as, formulation of policy for a more effective and expeditious implementation of subdividing the lands.



Through Project SPLIT, lands distributed under collective Certificates of Land Ownership Award (CCLOAs), were subdivided and agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) who were previously awarded lands under collective ownership would be issued individual land titles.

Various conflicts such as opposition and legalities, among others, arose during land validations of the lands to be parcelized.

Cruz said that they have established resolutions and ways to deal with the challenges of parceling the lands which he believed would result in a smoother and faster implementation of the project.

“The key here is close cooperation and better communication among

ourselves so that we can achieve the great teamwork needed to accomplish the goals of providing ARBs’ land tenure security,” he said.

The Secretary added that the project would also protect their property rights because they have land titles to hold on to.

The SPLIT project, being implemented in 78 provinces, in 15 regions, started in November 2020 and would end in the year 2024.

During the activity, SPLIT National Project Director and Assistant Secretary Rene Colocar reported that the Project has already subdivided 174,798.86 hectares of agricultural lands to 112,783 ARBs.

The event, attended by SPLIT project implementers nationwide, was held in Cebu City on February 21-24, 2022.

CRUZ SWEARS IN NEWLY APPOINTED DAR PERSONNEL IN C. VISAYAS



Seventeen (17) newly promoted personnel of the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) in the Central Visayas region recently took their oath of office before Secretary Bernie F. Cruz to help the department in its intensified implementation of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program.

Cruz said most of them have waited for many years to get the promotions they have been dreaming of and that they should understand what the farmers feel waiting for their lands and support from the government.

“You know how it felt waiting for something you’re unsure of if it would come. I ask you to give all your efforts in doing your job because the success of our work is the realization of the farmers’ dreams,” he said.

Cruz shared to the 12 Municipal

Agrarian Reform Program Officers and five division chiefs his parents’ advice on getting the work done: “You should love what you’re doing and not do it for any other purpose. That’s how you get things done effectively.”

Meanwhile, DAR Regional Director Romeo Reyes told the personnel that they were promoted because of their potential to do more and not just because of what they have accomplished in their office.

“I believe that you will do the tasks or even exceed what the department expects from you,” he said.

The ceremony was also attended by Assistant Secretary for Field Operations Office Joey Sumatra, Asst. Regional Director Arthur Dulcero, all Provincial Agrarian Reform Program Officers of DAR VII, and other selected personnel.

TYPHOON ODETTE-AFFECTED SIARGAO FARMERS GET DAR AID



The Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) is set to give P500,000 to the farmers of Poblacion Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries’ Organization (PARBO) to help the organization recover from the losses suffered from typhoon Odette.

DAR Secretary Bernie Cruz, together with some of his officials visited the 150 farmer-members of PARBO in Barangay San Isidro in Poblacion and had a meeting with them to know what assistance they need.

At the meeting, Cruz found out from the PARBO officials and

members that they are not earning anymore after the farmers’ rice fields and the coconut trees were felled by the typhoon.

“From what we saw when we inspected Siargao, more than 60 percent of coconut trees are now gone and their rice crops were destroyed too. So, for two months now since the typhoon happened, these farmers are hardly earning anything,” Cruz said.

Cruz said that since the typhoon, the farmers are now heavily in debt. “They didn’t only lose their crops to the typhoon, their houses were damaged too,” he said.



At the meeting with the farmers, Cruz promised to give P500,000 as start-up capital for the cooperative. The Secretary suggested to the PARBO officials to forget the members credit and treat the credit as dividend for the members.

“I don’t want the farmers to be burdened with paying their old debts when at present they are already struggling to survive,” Cruz said.

Cruz also visited the Garcia Agrarian-Beneficiaries Cooperative in Barangay Garcia in Sta. Monica.

DAR Caraga Regional Director Leomides Villareal said the cooperative also suffered losses because the typhoon destroyed their processing facility where

they process turmeric into different products.

“The typhoon didn’t only wipe out their crops, it also demolished their office and processing facility,” Villareal said.

Villareal said they asked the cooperative to make an estimate of the damages made to the cooperative’s office and food processing facility for submission to the office of the secretary.

“The Secretary promised to help them for the repairs so they can immediately work on it and start their business again,” Villareal said.

Villareal said that the Secretary ordered him to give high-value crop vegetable seeds and fertilizers so that the farmers can start planting and earning again.

DAR set to distribute contested agri lands in Agusan del Norte

Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) Secretary Bernie F. Cruz announced that the contested 106.1756 hectare-landholdings of JC Agri-Development Inc. (JCADI) properties located in Dona Rosario, Tubay Agusan del Norte, would be distributed soon and are just awaiting the detailed orders from the Office of the President.

"I assure you that our process of acquisition and distribution is on its way. We are here to discuss the survey and validation of landholdings as well as the funds needed," said Cruz during his recent dialogue with the Unyon sa Maguuma sa Agusan del Norte (UMAN) in the said town.

Cruz added that they need to begin identifying qualified and deserving farmer-beneficiaries of the lands. The 106.1756 hectare-land, which



was part of 210.2195 hectare property owned by JCADI, had an approved Land Use Conversion Application per DAR Secretary's Order dated June 23, 2010.

On August 11, 2017, UMAN petitioned that the 106.1756 hectares with approved conversion be acquired and awarded to their members/farmers. The DAR Central Office rendered an order sustaining the revocation of the Approved Conversion Order in January 2021.

In August of the same year, an appeal of both

the cancellation of the Conversion Order was interposed by JCADI to the Office of the President.

At this point, the Secretary said that they have already received news that the case has a resolution in favor of the farmers and they are just waiting for a more detailed order from the Office of the President.

Of the 210.2195 hectare property, the other 104.0439 hectare was also opposed by JCADI. In 2012, they filed a protest/opposition for the

issuance of the Notice of Coverage to the said landholdings. In 2013, the DAR Regional Office denied their opposition.

CARAGA Regional Director Leomides Villareal said that they are doing all their best to provide social justice to the farmers.

"I am happy with the development of the case and we will follow the process of land distribution according to the law so that the farmers would legitimately own the lands," he said.

DAR TO PARCELIZE 3,150-HECTARE PALM PLANTATION TO 1,143 AGUSAN DEL SUR FARMERS

Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) Secretary Bernie F. Cruz recently held talks with the National Guthrie Plantations Inc.-Multi-Purpose Cooperative (NGPI-MPC) to parcelize the validated 3,150.07 hectare-palm plantation to its 1,143 member/ agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs).

In December of 1988, a collective certificate of land ownership award (CCLOA) was issued in the name of NGPI-MPC. In 1990, the estate was renamed Filipinas Palmoil Plantation Incorporated (FPPI), located in the towns of Rosario and San Francisco, Agusan del Sur.

Cruz said the department held a meeting with the NGPI-MPC, including the Field Validation Team, to discuss their issues and concerns on the validation and the process of subdividing the landholdings.



"We are here to look at their state of affairs and reassure them that we would overcome any challenges and obstacles in the implementation of parceling out the plantation," he said.

The parcelization of the landholding is implemented under the SPLIT project or the Support to Parcelization of Lands for Individual Titling. Through this project, lands distributed under CCLOAs are subdivided to the ARBs and they

would also be issued with individual land titles.

The Secretary said the SPLIT project would strengthen their ownership of their lands and their land tenure security.

"I wish that when you receive your individual land titles, you will still cooperate with each other and double your effort in making the lands more productive," Cruz said. The validated landholdings include Alcular group, with 2,305.91

hectares; Abalayan group, 431.08 hectares; and Sustino group, 413.08 hectares.

Caraga Regional Director Leomides Villareal is confident that the issuance of individual land titles would take place in the very near future.

"Most of them are open and receptive to suggested plans and actions during the meeting because they all shared one dream and that is to have their land titled to their name

and to have an improved economic lives," Villareal said.

SPLIT project is a response to the directive given by President Rodrigo Duterte, during the 36th Cabinet Meeting held on April 1, 2019 at the Malacañan Palace, to divide collective parcels of lots and instructed the DAR to convene a task force and come up with a program to ensure the distribution of individual CLOAs from the collective titles.