

# Balitang

# DAR

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## DAR OIC-chief vows to stop selling, pawning of farm lands



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# DAR OIC-chief vows to stop selling, pawning of farm lands

By Richard B. Gallardo

AGRARIAN Reform OIC-Secretary Rosalina Bistoyong has vowed to stop the practice of selling or pawning of farm lands by farmer-beneficiaries as it defeats the purpose of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (CARL): "Promote social justice and move the nation towards sound rural development."

"Extending financial assistance to our cash-strapped farmer-beneficiaries is our main concern. Our advocacy to reach out to as many farmers as we can lies not only in distributing lands but also in providing vital support services," Bistoyong said.

The DAR OIC-chief said that many farmer-beneficiaries were forced to sell or pawn their newly awarded farm lands for lack of capital to shoulder the cost of land preparation and of farm inputs.

"Worse, some of them have already sold or pawned their newly awarded farm lands even before they are awarded to them," she said shortly after accepting the DAR flag from out-going Secretary Rafael "Ka Paeng" Mariano in a simple turnover ceremony held at the DAR Central Office in Quezon City.

Bistoyong said she would give more premiums on the plight of newly installed farmer-beneficiaries to prevent them from selling or pawning their newly awarded lands.

"Starting this year we will give direct support services to all newly installed farmer-beneficiaries because they are the ones I want to serve the most," said Bistoyong.

Defiant former landowners usually employed security men to harass, intimidate and drive farmer-beneficiaries

away from the lands awarded to them under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP), thus, depriving them of tilling their lands, their main source of income, and rendering them incapacitated to finance their farming activities.

Bistoyong's preferences to serve newly installed farmer-beneficiaries were borne out of the physical and psychological abuses that they had gone through while struggling to gain full control and ownership of the farm lands that had already been awarded to them. "We need to provide them something to start with so that they will not be tempted to turn to loan sharks, who are extending credits at excessive interest rates," said Bistoyong, who once headed the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP). Bistoyong drew a big applause from the farmers and members of peasant organizations present in the turnover rite when she announced that she would pursue vigorously her request to the Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP) to reduce the interest rate on farmers' loans, from the normal 8.5-percent rate to 4 percent.

"Of course, I cannot do all these by myself. That's why I am appealing to all farmer-beneficiaries, as well as, to all DAR personnel to join me in this crusade. We need each other. And God's help, too" Bistoyong, the president of the National Union of Career Executive Officers (NUCEO), added.



## SIDEBAR



## "Kampanya kontra-Ariendo" launched in Negros Occ.

By Remy Arcaina

BACOLOD CITY - OIC-Secretary Bistoyong led a massive campaign against pawning and selling of farm land in La Castellana, Bacolod City. It was dubbed as "Kampanya Kontra-Ariendo."

Bistoyong said that DAR-Negros Occidental South has distributed a total of 10,537 landholdings comprising 169,219.599 hectares to 73,406 ARBs.

"Unfortunately, out of 73,406 ARBs, only 28% or 20,751 of 73,406 ARBs were properly documented and profiled by the DAR," Bistoyong said.

As of October 4, 2017, she said, a total of 639 landholdings comprising of 16,598.1286 hectares were illegally leased, sold, conveyed and transfer red by 8,145 ARBs.

Bistoyong directed DAR-Negros Occidental

South to intensify its campaign any sale, transfer, lease or any other form of conveyance by the beneficiaries of their lands within 10 years from the time of awarding.

Bistoyong pointed out that "the study revealed that among the major reasons the ARB's engage in "arriendohanay" system includes lack of financial production capital, farm tools, and equipment, technical expertise, strategies, farm management skills, and business acumen.

"The practice of 'aryendo' is illegal. It is and a willful and deliberate obstruction in the delivery of the agrarian reform program," Bistoyong said. "We urge those who were forced to lease or sell their lots to hold their ground. Violators will be charged and, eventually disqualified from the program," she pointed out.



# PARC Secretariat leads consultation with farmers on agri-venture arrangements

By Pinky Roque

DAPITAN CITY—The Presidential Agrarian Reform Council (PARC) Secretariat sought to guide agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) involved in agri-business venture agreements (AVA) in making sound decisions when dealing with their investors.

PARC Secretariat Director James Arsenio Ponce said farmers often get involved in onerous agreements because they are not properly guided on the laws and processes in negotiating their AVAs.

“This resulted to farmers getting abused and oppressed by investors who take advantage of the formers’ lack of understanding of the provisions contained in their AVAs,” Ponce said.

The consultation, he stressed, would help guide the ARBs and their cooperatives on what options to take in negotiating contracts with investors.



“The workshop would also guide them in formulating action plans in addressing their AVA problems,” Ponce said referring to participants made up of ARB cooperative officials, who were asked to submit their existing AVA contracts for

review and evaluation.

“Upon hearing their problems with their AVAs, we discussed on the challenges and came up with proposed recommendations and suggestions to each of their problems,” he said.

**PARC Secretariat Director James Arsenio Ponce (extreme right) together with Regional Agrarian Reform Adjudicator Rolando Cua and Bienvenido Valerio of the Support Service Office of DAR talks with agrarian reform beneficiaries on their various AVA problems.**

Ponce also emphasized that the workshop is being conducted after President Rodrigo Duterte, who serves as the chairperson of PARC, ordered that all AVA contracts involving tenants and landholders must pass through DAR for evaluation to determine if the AVAs are in conformity with the 1987 Constitution as well as of agrarian reform laws, rules and regulations.

Earlier, the PARC Secretariat conducted an ARB’s forum on the implementation of AVAs.

## DAR beneficiaries told to expand livelihood projects

By Alexander Lopez

SURALLAH, South Cotabato – OIC-Secretary Bistoyong recently spearheaded the distribution of various livelihood projects to Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (ARBs) in Barangay Centrala, Surallah, South Cotabato.

Bistoyong urged the beneficiaries to take the projects seriously and make them sustainable to benefit their fellow ARBs in the area.

DAR joined forces with Pilmico Foods Corporation, a subsidiary of Aboitiz Equity Ventures and Aboitiz Foundation to make the distribution of livelihood projects possible.

Bistoyong said the livelihood projects is the first Public-Private Partnership (PPP) endeavor that DAR entered into to help ARBs augment their income.

A total of nine selected ARBs from three barangays in Surallah received egg-laying chickens with egg dispersal machines and hog dispersal kits.

Gloria Aguilar, the beneficiaries’ representative, expressed gratitude for the help that comes their way.

Aguilar assured that they would take the projects seriously to increase their income. sustain and expand to elevate their way of life.

“Our responsibilities do not end upon receipt of these livelihood projects. We need to ensure their sustainability to benefit the other ARBs,” she pointed out.

Witnessing the turnover ceremony were also joined by Apol B. Castro, vice president for corporate strategy and business development of Pilmico; Surallah Mayor Antonio Bendita; Director Leomides Villareal of the Public Affairs and Media Relations Service of DAR Central Office; DAR Region 12 Director Nasser M. Musali and other top DAR officials in the region.

In her message, Castro said the aim of the project is



**OIC-Secretary Rosalina Bistoyong listens as ARB member Gloria Aguilar explained the strategies she employs to sustain and expand the egg-laying chickens with egg dispersal machines project she received during the turnover ceremony. Also in photo: DAR-12 Director Nasser M. Musali (right) and other top officials of DAR in the region.**

to develop and build a purpose-driven community through sustainable livelihood programs.

She also emphasized that support to ARBs in the area is part of the corporate social responsibility of Pilmico and Aboitiz Equity Ventures under the project “Mahalin Pagkaing Atin,” which aims to support home-grown products and backyard farmers who are aspiring to become farmer-entrepreneurs.

Mayor Bendita thanked DAR and Pilmico for choosing the ARBs of Surallah as recipients of the project.

## DAR, Ateneo de Davao U to enhance sugar block farming

By Leena Faith Villanueva

ILOILO CITY-The DAR recently forged an agreement with the Ateneo de Davao University-Institute for Socio-Economic Development Initiatives (ADDU-ISED) to enhance sugar block farming and improve the production and income of 1,655 sugarcane farmers here.

DAR Regional Director Gideon Umadhay said the project seeks to increase farmers’ household income and to sustain the development of the sugarcane industry in Western Visayas.

“This project will be implemented in nine municipalities in the provinces of Capiz, Antique and Iloilo,” Umadhay said.

Under the agreement, the DAR will focus on the institutional aspects and will be in charge of organizing the farmers.

“The sugar block farming also seeks to improve the yield of sugarcane farms that are collectively managed by cooperatives,” Umadhay said, adding that it is aligned with the purpose of addressing issues on high poverty incidence in the region.

For its part, the ADDU-ISED will provide technical assistance, like orientation and trainings.

The agreement was signed by DAR Regional Director Gideon Umadhay, Assistant Regional Director Florentino Siladan, Provincial Agrarian Reform Program Officer Felix Servidad and ISEDI Executive Director Jocelyn Cabo.



## President's Note

# CARP, bunga ng Pagkakaisa

SADYANG nakatutuwang masdan ang kasiyahan sa mga mata ng mga magsasaka makaraang mapasakamay nila ang matagal nang minimithi – ang titulong magpapatunay ng kanilang pag-aari sa lupang sinasaka.

Alam kong mahabang panahon ang lumipas bago narating ang puntong ito na bahagi ng mahalagang proseso na naaayon sa batas.

Sa tagumpay na ito, sana maisip natin na hindi lamang ito para sa ating mga sarili, kundi maging sa kinabukasan ng ating mga anak at ng mga susunod pang salinlahi.

Atin rin sanang kilalanin ang ambag ng iba't-ibang sector ng lipunan na bumuo ng konsepto ng repormang pansakahan sa bansa. Ang kanilang pananaw ang nagbunsod upang ialay ang kanilang lakas at talino para maisakatuparan ito.

Huwag din sanang isantabi ang mga dating may-ari ng lupa na napasailalim sa malawakang programa ng repormang pansakahan o CARP. Sa kabila nang kadalasa'y itinuturing silang kontrabida ng programang ito, hindi naman iyon naisalamin sa kabuuang anyo sa hanay ng mga may-ari ng lupa. Ang katawagang ibinabato sa kanila ay bunga lamang ng propagandismo, kaiba sa tunay na kaganapan sa kanayunan. Katunayan, marami rin naman ang tumangkilik, nakiisa at kusang-loob na nagpasailalim ng kanilang mga lupain sa CARP.

Kaming inyong mga linkod-bayan ay saksi sa maraming anyo ng pagtutulungan, pag-uugnayan at pagkakaisa ng mga mahahalagang sector, kabilang na ang mga maliliit na magsasaka, mga manggagawang-bukid at mga may-ari ng lupa

Hindi rin naman maiwawaksi ang sakripisyo ng iba't-ibang sangay ng Kagawaran ng Repormang Pansakahan o DAR upang maisakatuparan ang panata ng sambayanan. Ipinagmamalaki ko kayo.

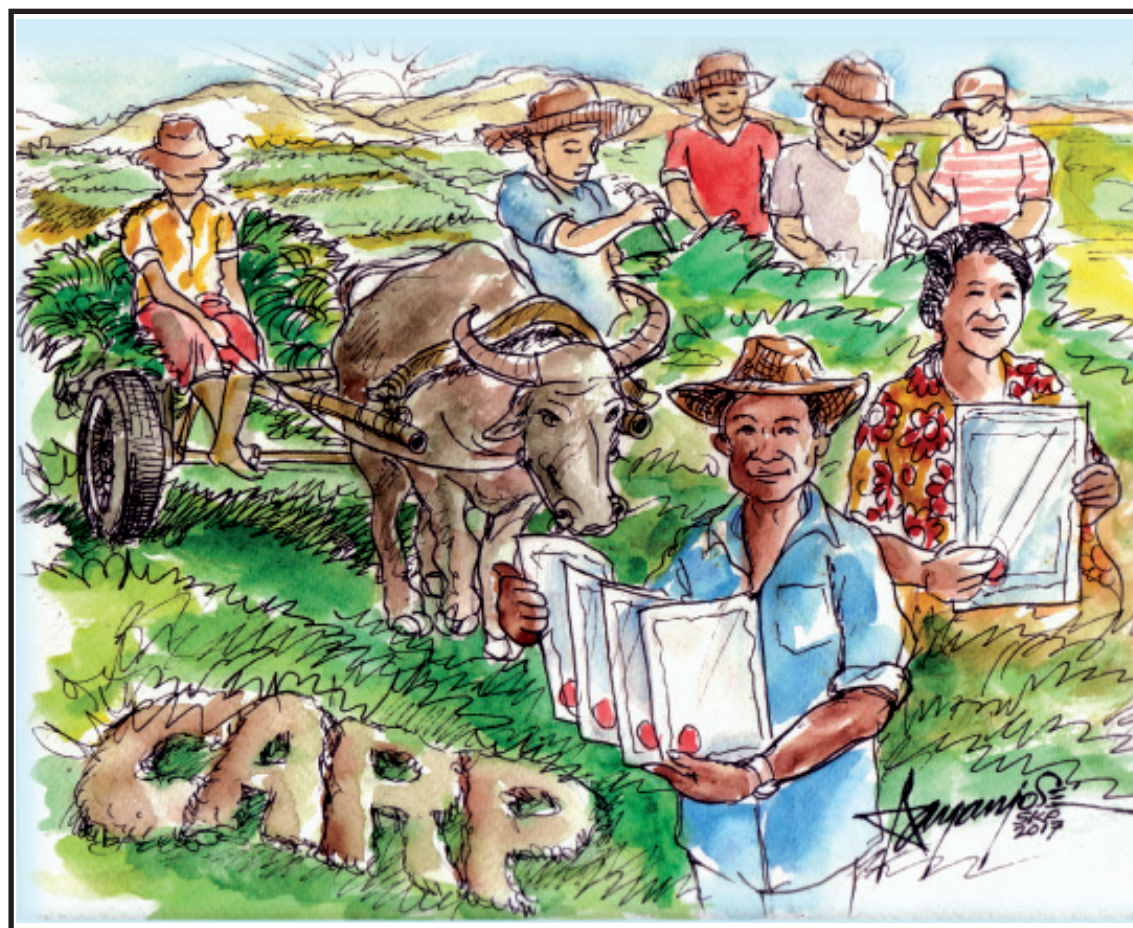
Hindi nga lang natatapos sa pamamahagi ng lupa ang ating gawain. Ano ang silbi ng lupa kung salat naman sa kaalaman ang ating mga magsasaka para pagyamanin ito?

Dito pumapasok ang usaping suportang serbisyo. Hindi man sapat, pilit pa rin itong isinusulong sa tulong ng iba't-ibang bansa at maging ng mga institusyon na kinabibilangan ng mga ito.

Mahaba pa nga ang ating tatahakin, pero makakaasa ang lahat na kaagapay ninyo ang pamahalaan. Sa pamamagitan ng DAR, pilit nating aabutin ang ating mithi – ang isulong ang kaunlarang pangkanayunan.

Ang biyaya ng lupa ay simula pa lamang. Panahon na upang ang biyayang ito ay ating pagyamanin.

*(A message of President Duterte as delivered by OIC-Secretary Bistoyong during CLOA distribution in San Narciso, Quezon last October 25)*



## Federalism and agrarian reform

THE MOVE to shift our system of government from unitary to federal is in high gear nowadays. Crusades for this change have sprouted across various sectors from regional down to the village levels in the country. These moves are not only happening here in the Philippines. Constituencies in other nations too are also calling their governments to switch to a federal system of governance.

On the frontline of these enormous efforts to adopt federalism is our dear President Rodrigo Roa Duterte. It has been the vision of President Duterte to effect changes in the governance of this country. And alongside these changes is the transformation of the lives of every Filipino.

As the Director of the Public Assistance and Media Relations Service (PAMRS) of the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), I am viewing the effects of federalism into the lives of the farmers in the country, especially those landless. How will the agrarian reform program benefit from federalism?

Agrarian reform is national in scope as the law, the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP), as amended, covers the entire country. The program is not only limited to the distribution of lands to the landless farmers and tillers. CARP also

deals with the implementation of support programs and services designed to develop the beneficiaries of CARP.

But I also perceive domestic or regional aspects and concerns on land distribution through CARP. Landless farmers and landowners usually belong to the same towns, provinces, and regions. There are instances that they belong to the same tribe or associated among

themselves in religious or community associations and groupings. There are times that they are also related by blood.

It is in this situation that I see possibilities of fast-tracking the process of agrarian reform through federalism. Federalism entails power and independence given to the regional governments from the central leadership. These local governments will also be allowed to pass, amend and legislate laws that are suited to their situation. Regional governments will be tasked primarily to ensure the welfare of the people of their respective states, including the protection of their interests.

It is my hope that the future framers of the country's federal system will consider these factors in terms of strengthening the agrarian reform program to help alleviate the lives of Filipino farmers. ●

Balitang **DAR**

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# DAR highlights support services in anti-poverty forum

By Jiru Nikko M. Rada

“CONTINUING delivery of support services to beneficiaries of the agrarian reform program shall ensure the productivity of the agricultural lands distributed by the government,” OIC-Secretary Bistoyong said during an anti-poverty forum at the Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM) recently.

The Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) joined nine other agencies of the Human Development and Poverty Reduction Cabinet Cluster (HDPRCC) in launching the Duterte administration’s anti-poverty program for the fulfillment of the ‘10 Basic Needs’ of the Filipinos poor.

The ‘10 Basic Needs’ of the poor, as identified by National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC), include food and land reform, water, shelter, health, education, work, social protection, healthy environment, peace, and participation.

“DAR is working closely with key government agencies such as the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP) in addressing the agricultural and financial needs of our farmers,” Bistoyong explained while citing around 44,000 farmer beneficiaries who have benefited from almost P4 billion in credit assistance since the APCP was launched years ago.

She pointed out that under the agency’s support services office, farmer organizations and agrarian reform communities were provided with modern farm equipment, infrastructure projects such as bridges, farm-to-market roads, and post-harvest facilities, and countless livelihood trainings to promote rural enterprise development.

Data show that a total of 5.4 million agrarian reform beneficiaries have been trained since 1987 while 4,100 products and services have been developed since 2004. These, along with 2,211 agrarian reform communities launched in 1,288 municipalities, are among the various support services designed by the government to uplift the economic status of the Filipino farmers.

## Kilos sambayanan

DAR launched the second leg of the Duterte administration’s anti-poverty information and advocacy



**Secretary Bistoyong explains to the public the services they can avail from DAR.**

caravan at the People’s Park in Davao City while the main program in Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM) in Quezon City is being aired in broadcast media simultaneously in Vigan City, Naga City, Cebu City and Butuan City.

Davao’s People’s Park served as the learning ground for hundreds of Davaoeños who gained knowledge about the different efforts and services that the government is implementing to alleviate poverty at the grassroots level.

The Presidential Communications Operations Office (PCOO) and the NAPC launched the first leg of the “Kilos SAMBAYANAN (Kilos para sa

Sampung Batayang Pangangailangan)” last July 16 in Delpan, Tondo. It sought to mobilize the HDPRCC and unite all sectors of society to address the country’s problems on food security, land reform, environmental protection, and housing.

DAR XI Regional Director Joseph Orilla, in a statement, voiced out his commitment to “consistently implement the department’s thrust and mandate to eventually uplift and sustain the economic status of Filipino farmers.”

Government data show that more than 4.7 million hectares of agricultural lands have been awarded to

around 2.7 million farmers since the agrarian reform program was implemented in 1972. In President Rodrigo Duterte’s first year of administration alone, almost 60,000 hectares of agricultural lands were distributed to some 31,000 farmer beneficiaries.

Assistant Regional Director for Operations Venchito Mandap said that agrarian reform is one of the foundations of national development as it seeks to solve landlessness in rural areas.



**Secretary Bistoyong (center) together with NAPC lead convenor Liza Masa (12nd from right) government officials pose with fist clenched as a sign of solidarity.**



SAFADECO's arduous journey to success

## Piso-piso a day

By Alura Jaso

SORSOGON CITY, Sorsogon – Saving a peso a day may not ring a bell to some. But to 16 farmers in Barrio Salvacion here, it means a lot.

Twenty-five years ago, things looked rather tough economically for these group of farmers. They could hardly make both ends meet for their respective families. They practically worked day and night separately but still their efforts seemed not enough to provide even the very basic needs of their families.

Until one day, over cups of coffee, one of them, Tita Desquitado, coined the idea of saving a peso every day, hopeful that something fruitful would come out of it. The rest is history.

Today, the original 16 farmers, Desquitado, Salvador F. Dugan Sr., Raquel B. Jamisal, Joselito D. Arabaca Jr., Lito L. Legazpi Sr., Jaime T. Sicad, Delfin T. Sicad Sr., Teodoro L. Legazpi, Leonardo Jasareno, Gracia Laguidao, Salvador L. Jaraba, Salvador Laguidao, Emeterio Rosendo, Luis Jamisola, Ester Sicad and Rosalina B. Jamisal and/or their heirs are now the proud pioneers of a successful cooperative, the Salvacion Farmers Development Cooperative (Safadeco) in Sorsogon City.

“Our humble beginning has been told many times over to inspire others. That’s also the reason why we have No. 1 in our logo,” Safadeco Chairperson Tita Desquitado said. “Sadly, 11 of the pioneer members, Jaime Sicad, Delfin Sicad Sr., Teodoro Legazpi, Leonardo Jasareno, Gracia Laguidao, Salvador Jaraba, Salvador Laguidao, Emeterio Rosendo, Luis Jamisola, Ester Sicad and Rosalina Jamisal, did not live long enough to see the huge development of the cooperative that we had only in our dreams, then,” she said.

They may have already gone, but their memories stay in the hearts and minds of their peers, as well as, of those who come after them. Because of their contributions, Safadeco came into being.

Today, the cooperative has flourished and become a household byword, thanks largely to its core values, their motto: “Saving a peso-a-day makes thing happen” and modest living.

Actually, Safadeco started its humble beginning through a consumer store, the first business enterprise it established. Later, it ventured into copra trading. The members’ strong determination, discipline and diligence were the key ingredients to the cooperative’s steady rise to success.

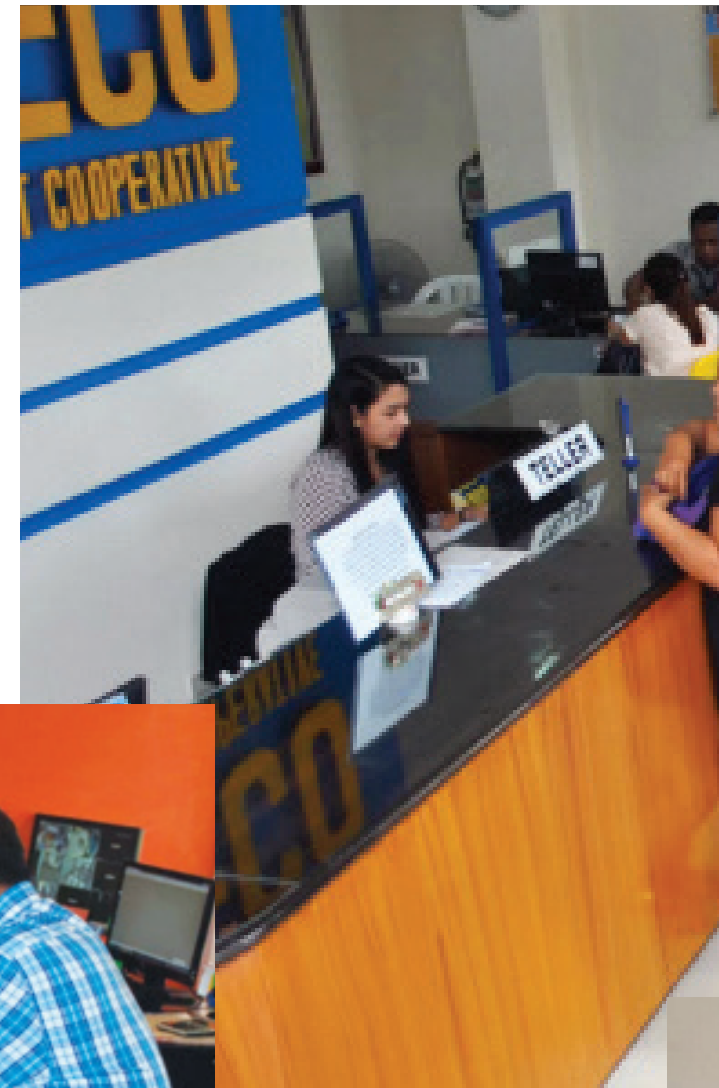
Safadeco’s big break came in 2012 when they operated under the Microfinance Innovations in Cooperatives (MiCoop) in Agrarian Reform Areas (ARAs) Project, a partnership of the National Confederation of Cooperatives (Natcco) and the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR).

The MiCoop project seeks to extend the reach of cooperative’s microfinance services to the poorest of the poor who desire to engage in micro, small and medium enterprises but have no access to formal lending institutions and/or are dependent on informal lenders who charge usurious interest rates. It is being implemented based on a scheme where Natcco enters into partnership with a viable and qualified



cooperatives to help them put up new branches or satellite offices in areas of high poverty incidence.

Safadeco’s main office transferred to the city proper of Sorsogon in the same year, 2012, where it opened credit and savings services. Soon, its wings expanded to cover the whole city of Sorsogon, and adjoining municipalities, Castilla and Casiguran.



The consumer store in Salvacion was later enhanced and improved so that a part of it became the cooperative’s satellite office.

**Reaching Out**

In 2015, Safadeco expanded further so that its operation covered the whole province of Sorsogon. This resulted to the opening of its second satellite in the municipality of Irosin to cater

to the needs of its members in the southernmost part of the province.

As if this was not enough, a third satellite office was opened at the heart of Castilla to accommodate members not only in Castilla, but also in adjacent Pilar town; and a fourth office in the commercial center of Bulan, Sorsogon.

“I am so thankful that Safadeco has now a satellite

# goes a long way!



office here in Bulan. Before, I used to go to Irosin to make transactions. This enables me to save money for transportation, while sparing me the time and effort travelling to the main office,” said Safadeco member Rhodea Gidoc.

“Since the opening of Safadeco office in Castilla, I found it easy to recruit friends to the cooperative,” Emerlita Maraña said.

The opening of Safadeco satellite offices helped generate jobs for children of cooperative members, as well as, other locals with technical expertise, thus, making the cooperative truly a partner of the government in nation-building. Among the jobs offered were: satellite office heads development officers; cashiers and accounting clerk. But what made it popular is that it has helped transformed some sleepy villages into vibrant ones, with farmers becoming more active in their farms and/or other livelihood enterprises.

## A Model Farmers’ Coop

In 2016, NATCCO Area Manager Gerwyn Pura saw the capacity of Safadeco to acquire a piece of land and office building so that it didn’t take long for the NATCCO to extend to it a long-term real estate loan for land acquisition and building construction.

“Although this is still a loan, which the cooperative has to pay every month; at least the paying period will be only ten years. After that, the lot and the building will be Safadeco’s,” Pura said.

Today, the members, officers, and employees of SAFADECO enjoy the comfort of their very own two-storey building that is standing on a 520-square meter lot on Reyes St., Sorsogon City.

“The structure is designed for a three-story building. The ground floor is for the credit and savings office, the second floor is for the administrative offices, and the third floor, which will be constructed later, will be the function hall for special occasions like our general assembly,” Jessica Samantha Dob-Acleta, General Manager said.

During the inauguration of SAFADECO’s new office building, Cooperative Development Authority Regional Director II Ma. Lourdes P. Pacao, said, the partnership of DAR, NATCCO, and CDA is truly a very effective vehicle in providing support services to cooperatives.

“This is not just a building. This is their haven, which was once a simple dream of the Salvacion farmers for their community. This cooperative has helped many families, in this province,” Pacao said.

“Out of 50 Micoop nationwide, Safadeco is now ranked as one of the most successful cooperatives and serves as a model-cooperative across the country,” said NATCCO Chief Executive Officer Sylvia Paraguya.

Sorsogon Provincial Agrarian Reform Program Officer II Leonito M. Gaveria said he was very impress at SAFADECO and the people behind it.

“It is the only agrarian reform beneficiary organization (ARBO) in the Philippines that manages to provide itself with an office building, funded by the sweats of its members. I am so proud of their performance,” Gaveria said.

The pioneering member still remember when they created their logo, they did not forget to place the figure: No. 1 because it stands for the piso (one peso) which symbolizes their humble beginning. But today, that figure stands for being No. 1 among the Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries’ Organizations (ARBOs), especially in Sorsogon Province.

Certainly, everything starts from small things. From the piso-piso enterprise that it was, Safadeco has truly gone a long way. ●



## The Queen of Philippine Pineapples

# The Sweetest variety in the county can be found in an unexpected province

By Czarina Imperial

KNOWN as the sweetest variety of pineapple in the whole world, the Formosa variety reigns over the pineapple industry, particularly in Camarines Norte in the Bicol Region. The Formosa pineapple has, in fact, become one of the top agricultural products of the province that the Pinyasan Festival, a festival named in honor of the sweet fruit, is celebrated yearly for 25 years now in the capital town Daet. For bringing boundless opportunities for the people of Camarines Norte, such an honor is well earned.

In the time of Daet Mayor Tito Sarion, a Gawad Kalinga village was built in a pineapple plantation area in Barangay Bibirao which they called Pinyasan Village.

Most of the villagers' livelihood is planting the Butterball variety pineapple. The former mayor's programs then highlighted the pineapple industry of the town and the province. Sarion was the prime mover of the Pinyasan Festival, being a former pineapple grower himself.

Perhaps not too many people outside Bicolandia know about it but the Bicol Region is one of the biggest producers of pineapple in the country, with Camarines Norte giving 96% of its bountiful fruit to the production pie. It is believed that the reason for the pineapple's abundant growth in the province is the rich potassium content of its soil. Though pineapples tolerate low soil fertility, the best production is achieved when potassium in the soil is high. Pineapple farming is year-round, giving farmers an assured source of livelihood in between harvesting of coconuts.

### Success Story

Many pineapple farmers in Camarines Norte are Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (ARB), the Certificate of Land Ownership Award (CLOA)-holders, who plant pineapple in their coconut plantations. Their main crop remains coconuts, but because of the vast income-generating potential pineapple offers, a growing number have started to focus on pineapple farming, particularly the sweet, creamy,

and not-itchy-to-the-tongue formosa.

One successful pineapple farmer is Rosalina Malubay, an ARB from Mabilo II, Labo town. She was awarded 2.2 hectares of agricultural land by the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) in 1994, a land she was able to pay in full in 2010 from her earnings in planting and selling pineapple. "We owe everything to Queen Formosa," she attested.

Pineapple plantation, when managed properly and with adequate fertilization, yields a handsome profit resulting in much improved lives for the farmers. "We decided to cultivate our land and make it a pineapple plantation because formosa gives us good income," Rosalina explained. "A P10, 000 capital can give us a





return of P20, 000.00 to P25, 000.00. We are thankful that the government gives importance to the pineapple industry in our province,” she said.

Indeed, the support of the LGUs and the agencies like DAR, the Department of Agriculture (DA), the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), the Department of Tourism (DOT), and various NGOs, has helped make the pineapple industry in the province the huge success that it is now. One of the most decisive moves of Sarion was rebranding the sweetest pineapple variety formosa, which originally came from Taiwan, to “Queen Pineapple of the Philippines.”

Pineapples are not only sold per piece per size, in small, medium, large, and even XL, the fruit is also sold per kilo, to traders and wholesalers. Aside from trading her produce to individual pineapple traders, Malubay also sells a fraction of it to the Labo Progressive Multi-Purpose

pineapple-producing ARBOs in the province to help them meet the export quota.

LPMP also produces novelty items, high-quality textile fiber and fabrics called piñacloth, all out of pineapple leaves. Piñacloth is a pineapple by-product crafted in the weaving center, a high-quality textile fiber derived from pineapple leaves. Manually-scraped and machine decorticated piña fibers are interwoven with other fibers, such as polyester or silk, to come up with expensive silky fabrics for Barong Tagalog. The cooperatives’ fiber-based products are marketed locally and internationally. The coop has been awarded a Certificate in Good Manufacturing Services from the FDA-DOST, a testimony to the quality of the coop’s products.

Meanwhile, in Basud town, the Caayunan Multi-Purpose Cooperative (CMPC), also one of the assisted

## Growing numbers

In 2014, Camarines Norte produced 118,492.25 metric tons of pineapple comprising 96% of the Bicol Region’s total production, data from the Provincial Agriculture Office showed. The towns of Labo, where Malubay has her thriving DAR-awarded plantation, Basud, and San Lorenzo Ruiz are the top pineapple producers.

In terms of number of farmers, same with the area planted and production, Labo ranked first with 1,500 pineapple farmers; followed by Basud, 609; San Lorenzo Ruiz, 282; San Vicente, 240; Daet, 81, and; Sta. Elena which has 42 hectares planted to pineapple 42 hectares with 58 farmers.

There are a total of 2,969 pineapple growers, 33 pineapple farmer organizations, three cooperatives, three municipal federations, and one provincial federation, DAR-PIO Dava added.

Not everything was sweet in growing pineapples then and Dava enumerated some difficulties the farmers had: insufficient capital and inadequate technology, machines, equipment, and irrigation facilities resulting in poor production output; inadequate processing technology, facilities, and equipment; lack of market information and promotion of the products; lack of Ordinance/Resolution to protect the industry; short shelf-life of perishable derivatives; small sizes of pineapple fruit; and mishandling of the fruit which led to fast spoiling.

There have been plenty of continuous intervention, however, to address those industry constraints since its massive potential in uplifting the lives of the farmers in the province has been realized many

years ago. There is the Pinyasan Festival, which highlights, showcases, and promotes the pineapple industry for one. Also, there is the help of the DTI and other agencies in improving product labels and packaging. There are loans given to the farmers by DAR, DA, LGUs, and cooperatives, all with low interest and reasonable pay back terms. There are farm-to-market roads that were constructed, and equipment like tractors and juicer machines were given to farmers. DOST give trainings and seminars to farmers for optimum production and yield.

But there is no better intervention than people helping themselves. As Rosalina Malubay said, “hardwork and perseverance are my secrets to successful pineapple farming. It is important to treasure the blessings given, like the land that was awarded to us, and to make it enriched and productive for a steady livelihood for the family.”

*Reprinted from (Source of story) c/o Medel Mercado*



Cooperative (LPMP), one of ARB Organizations assisted by DAR, where she is a member.

## Pineapple-based products

The cooperative hit the jackpot when it started venturing into various enterprises, with products that are all pineapple-based. They now have “Queench,” a pineapple juice drink in a doy pack, pineapple jam, and dried pineapple named “Queen’s Choice” – all runaway hits in pasalubong centers all over the province.

Ironically, the product that gave the LPMP its sweetest returns is not the fruit itself but the fiber made out of decorticated or handscraped pineapple leaves which they export to a London-based company. The fiber is converted into a kind of leather known as “piñatex,” an alternative for leather used in making shoes, bags, and upholstery. The demand for the fiber is so high that the cooperative offers trainings on decortivating to

ARBOs in the province, is known for its pineapple-based pasalubong products with the trade name “Queen’s Delight.” DAR awarded the coop multi-million worth of assets such as Processing Center with office, screw-press machine, upright freezer, generator set, and other materials necessary to sustain production of its famous pure pineapple juice, now on its way to carving a niche in the market. The coop’s tarts, empanaditas, pie, and dehydrated pineapple are the other bestselling products especially in trade fairs.

According to Roma Amalia Dava, Provincial Information Officer of DAR-Camarines Norte, the province has a total of 1,805.55 hectares of farmland in its 12 municipalities devoted to formosa pineapple plantation with 9, 118 hectares more of potential areas for planting the highly valuable pineapple. Most of these farmlands are planted to the Queen Formosa, 99 percent in fact, while the remaining areas are planted to the butterball variety, a smallsize pineapple and mostly round.



**Cagayan Valley Region**

# DAR launches sugar block farming in Isabela



**DAR Assistant Regional Director Paramon Furigay and Municipal Mayor Christopher Mamaug cut the ceremonial ribbon at the Sugarcane Block Farm Project Site in San Antonio, Cabagan.**

CABAGAN, Isabela — The DAR, in partnership with the Sugar Regulatory Authority (SRA) and the local government of Cabagan, recently launched the sugarcane block farming (SBF) project to help boost sugarcane production and increase farmers' income.

The SBF project is collectively managed by cooperatives with the DAR providing logistical support, such as heavy tractor for land preparation and dump truck for hauling, and the SRA extending technical farming know-how.

DAR- Cagayan Assistant Regional Director Paramon D. Furigay said block farming was introduced in 2012 by the SRA in collaboration with DAR and the Department of Agriculture.

According to the SRA, pilot sugar block farms in Negros Island showed an average increase from 50.78 tons cane per hectare (TC/Ha) to 65.29 TC/Ha, or a 29-percent increase in farm productivity in the crop year 2013-2014 after being enrolled in the block farming program for a year.

This average 29-percent increase in productivity would translate to an estimated average increase of farmers' income by P39,815 per hectare, at 1.96 LKG/TC and a composite price of P1,400 per LKG-bag of raw sugar, the SRA said.

DAR expects to have the same result with the 44 farmer-beneficiaries of the Malasi Lake Producers Cooperative, the local cooperative in Cabagan that is managing a 35-hectare sugar block farm.

"The project will initially establish a nursery for high-yielding varieties of sugarcane and a techno-demo farm to showcase better technologies in sugarcane production," Furigay explained.

Block farming is the consolidation of the management of small farms of less than five hectares into a bigger farm of at least 30 hectares for farm productivity improvement. Ownership of the lands, however, remains with agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs). (Cristina B. Bautista)

**Eastern Visayas**

## Southern leyte farmers rejoice over P33.4-M road project

SILAGO, Southern Leyte, -- The DAR recently turned over to the Silago municipal government a farm-to-market road project to improve the lives of the agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) in Katipunan Agrarian Reform Community (ARC) here.

DAR Undersecretary for Policy, Planning and Research Office David D. Erro led the turnover ceremony held in Barangay Katipunan transferring the management of the 4.21-kilometer all-weather road traversing from Junction Katipunan to Barangay Catmon up to the Silago LGU.

Erro said the road project seeks to increase the ARBs agricultural production and family income.

Regional Director Sheila Enciso said the P33,498,898.00 total project cost of the JNR Katipunan-Catmon road was shared by the Silago municipal government and the DAR under the third phase of the Agrarian Reform Infrastructure Support Project (ARISP III) grant.

Enciso said 583 agrarian reform beneficiaries and 40 other residents from neighboring barangays or a total of 623 residents in the area would benefit in the Junction Katipunan to Catmon farm to market road.



Enciso reminded the recipients to manage and maintain the road since it would be subjected for monitoring for 10 years.

In her acceptance message, Mayor Pacita T. Almine thanked the DAR for the convenience and advantage that the project would bring to her town especially making the area accessible to other barangays and thus opening up other livelihood

opportunities to the residents in the area.

A student representative belonging to the 132 students of the Katipunan High School thanked the DAR and expressed their gratitude to Mayor Almine for continuously looking after their welfare by providing a straight and widened road where they can walk and travel conveniently.



*Assisting PARAD Canillas were Alma Lilibeth Bantugan, Acting Chief of the Agrarian Legal Services (ALS), Legal Assistant II Donald Doron, Stenographer Liza Sosoter and DAR Municipal Staff MARPO Anacleto Ancog and Development Facilitator Malou Quinlog. (Ma. Lydia D. Bantugan, LA II/PIO DAR Bohol)*



### Central Visayas

## Agrarian Reform Justice on Wheels rolls in Bohol

THE DAR recently implemented the Agrarian Reform Justice on Wheels (ARJOW) to hasten the adjudication and resolution of agrarian cases in Bohol.

Provincial Agrarian Reform Program Officer II (PARPO II) Grace B. Fua said Provincial Agrarian Reform Adjudicator (PARAD) Atty. Nellie S. Canillas conducted a hearing under ARJOW on a 17-year-old ejectment case in Barangay San Isidro, Mabini, Bohol instead at the Office of the PARAD in Tagbilaran City.

Fua said the case ended into a compromise agreement and a leasehold contract was forged between landowner Apolonio Tuyogon as represented by his son Transitu Tuyogon, and tenant Peter Barlosa, now a new leaseholder of the 1,500 square meters agricultural land planted with coconut and 8,345 sq. m. riceland located in San Roque, Mabini.

### CARAGA Region

## BOFIA's superb micro lending business gains DAR nod

Members of the Baleguian Organic Farmers Irrigators Association (BOFIA) in Jabonga town hailed the DAR for approving an increase on their credit line under the government's Agrarian Production Credit Program (APCP).

In the first semester of this year, BOFIA's approved credit line reached to P5 million or about 250 percent from the P2 million credit line granted to them in 2016, thanks to its being adjudged as the outstanding organization in 2016 for its excellent performance and impressive growth.

BOFIA represents the fastest growing agrarian-organization in Agusan del Norte for its micro-lending under APCP.

Provincial Agrarian Reform Program Officer Andre B. Atega credited the BOFIA's economic success to its strict disciplinary system, which resulted to a 100% repayment of loans to its members.

According to APCP Point Person Luningning B. Ycoy, the loan assistance for BOFIA's integrated rice production benefitted 63 members, who were also covered by crop insurance package in partnership with the Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation (PCIC).

Ycoy said BOFIA was granted an initial P900,000 loan last March 2017, benefitting 24 Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (ARBs), who are tilling a combined area of 36 hectares. The second credit release amounted to P 1,452,500 last April, benefitting 27 ARBs with working area of 51 hectares.

BOFIA chairperson Winefredo Maldo said its members' income now increased because of low interest rate compared to excessive rate imposed on them by informal moneylenders such as traders and input suppliers.

Maldo added his fellow farmer-beneficiaries are now ably supporting their children to school. Some said that they can also buy their household needs and agricultural inputs.

### Bicol Region

*The DAR Masbate headed by PARPO Felix E. Fruto (in red checkered polo) and OIC-MARPO Edwin C. Yanzon (2nd from right) take time to celebrate before the installation of ARBs to their respective awarded lands in Barangay Cagay, Masbate City. Giving his full support is Agrarian Affairs Specialist II Joseph B. Malapaz (rightmost in green shirt).*



## 40 new CLOA-holding farmers installed in Masbate

DAR recently distributed Certificates of Land Ownership Award (CLOAs) to 40 agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) in Barangay Cagay, Masbate City.

DAR Municipal Agrarian Reform Program Officer Edwin C. Yanzon said the landholding involves an area of 75.7782 hectares. It was formerly owned by Antonio Dela Rosa, Sr. and was acquired by the DAR through the Voluntary Offer to Sell (VOS) scheme.

"We carried out this activity not only to formally handover these land titles but also to remind you that as empowered farmers you have the responsibility to make your lands productive so you can have a stable livelihood, pay your amortizations and taxes, and help in the economic growth of your community,"

Provincial Agrarian Reform Program Officer II Felix E. Fruto told the ARBs.

After the distribution of titles, the DAR installed the ARBs, some of whom were not yet in possession of their newly awarded lands.

Agrarian Affairs Specialist Joseph B. Malapaz, Barangay Cagay Chairman Nilo N. Bueta and Barangay Agrarian Reform Council Chairperson Nila N. Bueta witnessed the installation of farmers.

"Our goal here is to ensure that all the ARBs are formally installed with full knowledge of the metes and bounds of their respective lots. We want them to start in the right direction so that they can harmoniously cultivate their lands," Fruto said. (Ross A. Lustestica)



# 'The broadcast professional'

## Dir. Leo R. Villareal

By Pinky Roque

DIRECTOR Leo, the cool and collected newly appointed director of the Public Assistance and Media Relations Service (PAMRS), is not new to the media industry. He has been a professional writer, producer and anchorman for radio and television for over 30 years in Davao City.

His career broadcasting started after taking up architectural drafting from the Technical University of Southern Philippines in 1980.

"I really wanted to take up architecture but my parents couldn't afford it. So I just took up a technical course in drafting instead," said Leo.

After graduating from his technical course, Leo started looking for a job. He said he walked in at the Radio Mindanao Network (RMN) office and tried to see if he can get a job.

"And right then and there, they gave me a job as one of their radio field reporter. After a year, I found out that I love it," Leo said.

His first 10 years in Radio Mindanao Network (RMN) as a field reporter, saw him slowly rise from the ranks. By 1994 to 1995 he became an anchorman for a news and public affairs show which aired in DXKR-Marbel and at the same time the station manager of RMN.

Leo said he decided to go back to school when he started anchoring his own radio program in the late 80's. "I was already in my late 20's when I took up political science in the University of Mindanao. The 4-year course was well worth it as politics is always the topic in my radio show," explains Leo.

By mid-1995, ABS-CBN offered him to be the executive producer and anchorman for "Hoy Gising!" He was also tapped as news reporter and news anchor for "TV Patrol" in Davao.

From 1999 to 2004, Leo also worked with GMA-7 as news writer, news editor, segment producer and anchorman for their respective television and radio news programs. In 2005 to 2006, he was the station manager TV-5.

His profession took a 180-degree turn from being a media man to PR man in 1986 when he personally met then Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte. "My team and I offered to help him in his mayoral campaign and he said yes. Since then our working relationship grew into friendship," Leo said.

In 2010 up to 2011, Leo co-anchored with Mayor Rodrigo Duterte a public affairs program of ABS-CBN



**Director Leo with his lovely wife Linda.**

called "Gikan sa Masa Para sa Masa" (Mula sa Masa Para sa Masa) in Davao. In 2007, he was again invited by Mayor Duterte to be his co-anchor for the program "Ato ni bay!" ("Atin ito!"). The show, produced

by ABS-CBN, showcased the beauty of Davao and its people and the milestones of Mayor Duterte's leadership.

From 2004 to 2006, he was the executive assistant for communication in the Provincial Governor's office in Sarangani. And then again from 2006 to 2007, this time at the Provincial Governor's Office in Compostela Valley.

Fast forward to 2013, Mayor Duterte made him his information officer in Davao City. When Duterte became

President in 2016, he again took Leo and brought him to DAR to head its communications office.

Born and raised in Calinan, Davao City, Leo describes his growing up years as "Ok naman... my parents started poor but eventually they were able to pull us up through hard work and dedication."

His father, Leovigildo was a driver when he married his mother, Milagros, who was then still in college taking up education. "My father, while already starting a family, paid for my mother's college education until she graduated."

"When my mother started teaching for a living, my father was able to save up and bought a small plot of land which he farmed. With sheer hard work and perseverance, my father became a farmer-businessman," Leo said.

Married to the lovely Termilinda Golosino, they are gifted with four children with whom they have six grandchildren.

He considers his family and his grandchildren the jewels of his life. "Now that I'm here in Manila, I'm always excited to get home to them."

A dedicated family man and a doting lolo, Leo said his favorite family bonding activity is going on road trips with them. "I always plan for us to go to different places in Mindanao. And because we all love lechon, I always buy it for our Sunday lunch or dinner."

During his free time he plays darts with his friends. He also loves listening to OPM music, especially the songs of Juan dela Cruz, his favorite band. "I sing too! My favorite is 'My love will see you through' by Marco Sison," Leo proudly says.

How do you see yourself 10 years from now? "Nag aalaga ng mga apo... I want to see all my grandchildren become happy, successful adults."

### **Fast talk with Director Leo:**

Coffee or tea?	-	Coffee
Wine or beer?	-	Wine
Play sports or watch sports?	-	Watch sports
Happiness or wealth?	-	Happiness
Funny or romantic?	-	Funny
Smile or game face?	-	Smile
Wet or dry?	-	Wet
Cat or dog?	-	Dog
Jokes or riddles?	-	Jokes
Christmas or Halloween?	-	Christmas
Passive or aggressive?	-	Aggressive
Ignore or acknowledge?	-	Acknowledge
Alone or in a crowd?	-	Alone
Invisible or invincible?	-	Invincible
Secretive or open?	-	Open
Hidden or discovered?	-	Hidden
Heart or soul?	-	Soul
Work or play?	-	Work
Touch or taste?	-	Touch