

Balitang DAR

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Millions worth of projects benefits thousands of farmers under Duterte admin



By Alexander D. Lopez

QUEZON CITY, Philippines – The Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) is on the right track at the start of the year as millions worth of support projects and services were already released to thousands of agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) in a series of turn-over ceremonies facilitated by the agency from January to March of 2018. DAR Secretary John R. Castriciones is determined to fully utilize the resources of DAR and its support agencies to help uplift the lives of farmers in the country.

In January, Sec. Castriciones said more than 36,000 ARBs and non-ARBs in 749 agrarian reform communities (ARCs) will receive direct support and assistance from DAR and its support agencies through the program dubbed as “Convergence on Livelihood Assistance for Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Project” or CLAAP. The program is among the mechanisms that DAR will pursue this year in accordance with the mandate of President Rodrigo Roa Duterte to help the farmers emancipate themselves from the bondage of tenancy and poverty.

The first CLAAP partnership that DAR signed to was with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) January 19 this year. During the signing of the partnership agreement, Sec. Castriciones emphasized:

The partnership is geared towards a common goal of improving the lives of farmers by helping them develop their agricultural enterprises. This will be conducted by helping them establish livelihood businesses like vegetable and fruit farming, food processing, vermicomposting, livestock raising, just to name a few.”

Under the agreement, DSWD will allocate and transfer to DAR around P1 billion funding for implementation while DAR, as the counterpart, will also pour in P186 million worth of its manpower, technical and management skills and the cost of series of capacity building training for the farmers.

Support to boost farm productivity

Last March 9, Sec. Castriciones led the distribution of P404-million worth of livelihood projects, farm machineries and infrastructure projects for the ARBs in Zamboanga Peninsula.

The projects include the supply of rubber seedlings, fertilizers, release of stocks for swine production, provision of farm tools, post-harvest facilities and the construction of a processing center for farmers who are engaged in abaca production, mat weaving and handicrafts.

In his message, Sec. Castriciones said DAR’s support services and projects will greatly benefit around 10,000 ARBs and 23,000 households at the same time enhance the rural economy and create job opportunities in the area.

In Cagayan Valley, 350 ARBOs received their farm equipment and livelihood projects worth P1.3 million through the Climate Resilient Farm Productivity Support Project (CRFPSP) of DAR.

Two other organizations in the towns of Mallig and San Guillermo in Isabela province were also provided with P2.466 million worth of support projects.

In Cagayan province, DAR facilitated the release of P400,000 worth of farm machineries to various ARBOs with the aim of increasing their farm productivity.

The farm machineries include two units of hand tractors, three heavy duty power tillers and two units of floating tillers. Rural infrastructure development

DAR also facilitated the release of a number of infrastructure projects during the period, most of which are farm-to-market roads (FMRs) that will provide the ARBs access to market centers.

Part of the P404 million allocation released in Zamboanga Peninsula were infrastructure facilities to include FMRs, bridges and communal irrigation systems. In Northern Samar, DAR released the funding for the construction of three FMRs with a 30-linear meter bridge worth P69.8 million intended for the ARBs of Gamay

town that will directly benefit the thousands of resident in Barangays Cagamutan, Bato, Bangon and GM Osias.

During the period, a P56.7 million worth of FMRs was also released by DAR for the ARBs in Lambunao, Iloilo while another P8.49 million road project was also turned over to the farmers in Alangalang, Leyte.

In Mindanao, particularly in the province of Surigao del Sur, DAR, together with the local government unit (LGU) in Tagbina town commenced the concreting of a 4.67-kilometer road in Barangay Kahayagan that will provide easy access for ARBs to market centers.

The groundbreaking of a water system worth P2 million was also facilitated during the start of the road construction that will provide potable water to ARB communities

in the area.

Skills enhancement

Aside from infrastructure support, DAR also provided the ARBs with learning processes and tools aimed to enhance their skills and knowledge.

During the period, DAR, through its Mindanao Sustainable Agrarian and Agriculture Development (MINSAAD) also launched its first marketing forum in Davao City. The marketing forum was facilitated to provide orientation on market opportunities for ARBOs from various areas in Mindanao, specifically from regions 10, 11 and 12.

Most of the ARBOs are currently engaged in the processing and trading of rice, corn, rubber, peanuts, and abaca. In Cagayan Valley, DAR also provided the various ARBOs with packages of skills training particularly on bamboo handicrafts and the development of bamboo nursery for bamboo production.

Technical trainings were also facilitated to enable the ARBs to increase their household incomes through easy-to-manage businesses with a quick return of investments in Naga City.

The trainings were handled in partnership with private support groups in the area, particularly the Pilmico Foods Corporation, the food subsidiary of Aboitiz Foundation, Inc. (AFI).

In Maasin Southern Leyte, DAR, under its program Community-Managed Potable Water and Sanitation Hygiene (CPWASH) introduced to ARBs a technology to convert wastes from their piggery projects into alternative fuel.

DAR has provided a biogas digester to ARBs from Barangay Hantag, in Maasin City. The machine is a sanitation facility that is capable of converting animal wastes into cooking gas.

DAR chief presents his thrusts, directions for the next 5 years

By Pinky Roque

QUEZON CITY— Agrarian Reform Secretary John Castricones presented the department's thrusts and directions to third DAR level officials the department's summative assessment for calendar year 2017 and planning conference for 2018 up to 2022.

The assessment and planning conference was held at the Sequoia Hotel on Feb. 12-15, 2017.

"These thrusts and directions that my team crafted are aligned with President Rodrigo Duterte's national goal of eradicating corruption, addressing social justice and improving the economic lives of our poor farmers," Castricones said.

The Secretary's thrusts and directions are

1. Initiate and streamline legal procedures.
2. Increase issuance of certificates of landownership award (CLOAs).
3. Implement programs that will help farmers retain their CLOAs and stay in their farms.
4. Use convergence of line departments to give support to the farmers.
5. Utilize the family as the focal point for agrarian reform.
6. Accomplish placements and promotion of DAR employees affected by

the Rationalization Plan.

"These [thrusts and directives] would also serve as guide for formulating strategic plans for agrarian reform implementation for the next five years," added Castricones.

Castricones emphasized the need to strategize on how to improve the implementation of agrarian reform program in the country.

During the plenary and focus group discussion, the participants, comprising of central office directors and regional directors identified the internal and external drivers, and barriers of the DAR, which either helped or hindered the achievements of its targets.

The DAR officials also presented the opportunities for improvements to further enhance the implementation of the DAR's major final outputs, support to operations projects, priority programs and management accountability.

The activity also aimed to ensure that the development thrusts of the administration of President Rodrigo Duterte are integrated into the programs and services of the DAR.

Castricones directed his officials to implement agrarian reform laws to help farmers fight for their rights and expedite the delivery of agrarian justice.

"With these thrusts and directives, I am confident that the workforce of the department will do its best to implement programs and projects that will hasten land distribution, delivery of agrarian justice and provision of support services," Castricones said.



Secretary
John Castricones

...leads 1st PARC Excom meeting for 2018

By Pinky Roque

"WE ARE here to help our farmers understand the contract they are entering in. In doing so, let us put ourselves in their shoes and make sure that they are signing a just and fair contract."

Thus said Secretary John Castricones in the first Executive Committee meeting of the Presidential Agrarian Reform Council (PARC Excom) last February 22 at the DAR Central Office in Quezon City.

Castricones issued the statement after Land Bank President Alex Buenaventura presented to the committee the proposed farm management and marketing agreement between Dana Fresh Fruits Corporation (DFFC) and Hijo Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Cooperative (HARBCO) of Davao del Norte.

After hours of deliberation, a majority of the committee unanimously endorsed for PARC approval the proposed farm management and marketing contract in the

presence of the representatives of both DFFC and HARBCO.

In other developments, Under-secretary Luis Pangulayan, who is also the PARC Secretary, reported updates on the audit report on the P1.4 million proceeds on the sales of Hacienda Luisita, Inc. (HLI) properties, specifically the 80-hectare Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway covered under the stock distribution option revoked by PARC.

Pangulayan said the Supreme Court ordered the DAR to engage the services of three reputable accounting firms approved by the parties (HLI and PARC) to audit the books of HLI and Centenary Holdings, Inc. to determine if the P1.4 million sales proceeds were actually spent for legitimate corporate purposes.

Pangulayan said the Supreme Court order states that any unspent or unused balance and any disallowed expenditures as determined by the audit will be

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...simplifies legal processes

By Remy Arcaina

THE DAR sought to simplify the cancellation cases of emancipation patents, certificates of land ownership award and other titles issued under the government's agrarian reform program.

This is contained in the Administrative Order No. 2, series of 2018 that Secretary John R. Castricones issued in compliance with President Duterte's order to reduce the requirements and processing time for all the applications requiring the department approval or agency action.

Castricones said one area that urgently requires an overhaul of the process is the cancellation of Emancipation Patents (EPs), certificates of Land Ownership Award (CLOAs) and other titles issued under any agrarian reform program.

He said the Omnibus Rules of Summary Procedure applies to the cancellation of an EP, CLOA or other title issued under any agrarian reform program arising from any of the following: Any

case that does not have any remaining unresolved Agrarian Law Implementation (ALI) issues; an ALI case where the decision has become final and executory, and is not the subject of an annulment action; and an ALI case or a cancellation case where the petitioner or all the parties would like to withdraw the said ALI or Cancellation case.

"The Order also applies to a cancellation case to correct erroneous technical descriptions in the EP, CLOA or other title issued under any agrarian reform program where the correction of the entries in the title shall not result to any issue regarding the identification or the number of the ARBs, or the correctness of the coverage of the landholding or any portion thereof and a Cancellation case with an approved land transfer clearance arising from the sale, donation, assignment of rights, succession as well as any other form of conveyance approved by the DAR pursuant to Section 27 of R.A.

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Secretay's Note

Financial Capital

FOR years, it has been the farmers' biggest handicap.

Various schemes had been implemented to address the farmers' seemingly insurmountable problem – financial capital – only to see them falling short of expectations.

The lack of financial capital resulted to alleged pawning and selling of CARP-awarded farm lots by farmer-beneficiaries despite the fact that the law prohibits such transaction within 10 years from the date of the awarding.

To pawn or sell farm lots by the recipient farmer is to defeat the very purpose of the agrarian reform law – “the establishment of owner cultivatorship of economic-size farms as the basis of Philippine agriculture through a more equitable distribution and ownership of land...”

As such, the government is simply not giving up on this lot of individuals, who were once hailed as the backbone of the country's economy. It will not let the thirty years of diligent works, the billions of pesos worth of resources delivered to enhance agricultural productivity and the sacrifices of DAR personnel in pursuit of social justice to go down the drain for nothing.

It is a covenant borne out of the desire to promote social justice and to move the nation towards sound rural development and industrialization.

To turn its back on them is to abandon the country's pursuit for food security and accept defeat in its war against rural poverty.

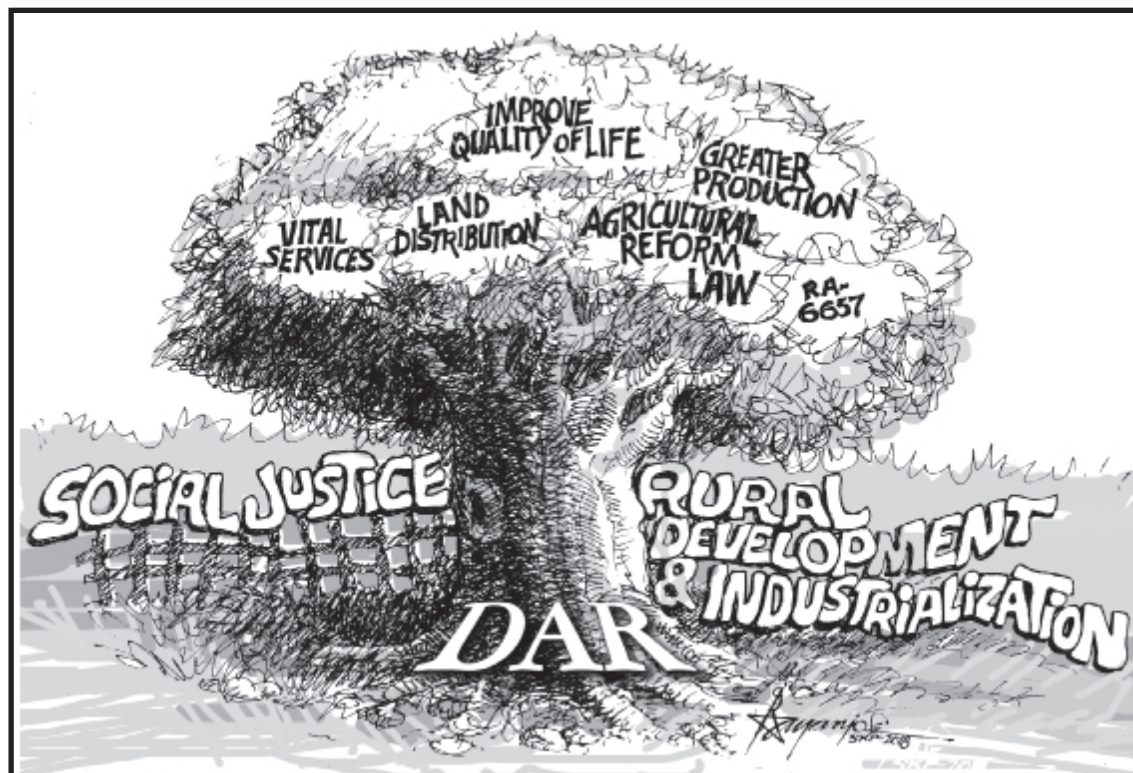
No less than President Rodrigo Roa Duterte understands the need to make them financially-abled when he directed the Land Bank of the Philippines to “look for ways and means” so that credit program would reach farmers and not have them travel long distances in order to avail of the programs.

Other than the President himself, the DAR knows the plight of the farmers better than the other government agencies, owing to it having its influence spread from the national down to the barangay level through the Barangay Agrarian Reform Committees or the BARCs. Through the BARCs, the DAR is practically rubbing elbows with the farmers so that their plights is already an open book to its officials and personnel.

The DAR keeps on extending a hand, hopeful that it could provide farmers and farmworkers “the opportunity to enhance their dignity and improve the quality of their lives through greater productivity of agricultural lands” as mandated under Republic Act 6657, the country's agrarian reform law.

The Department made it explicit when it announced that extending financial assistance is its main concern. This is to emphasize that the advocacy of the DAR to reach out to as many farmers as possible lies not only in distributing farm lots but also in providing vital support services.”

Foremost among these support services is providing farmers access to credit for farm inputs at half of the normal interest rate of 8 percent, a welcome development for the farmers so that they would embrace their farm lots and work harder for greater productivity rather than pawn or sell them, which is the last thing any government officials would ever entertain in his/her minds.



Change is here

“CHANGE”, that served as the central slogan during the 2016 campaign of President Rodrigo Roa Duterte is no longer a catchphrase. It is already here and real. Change is already felt by millions of Filipinos. Its manifold positive impacts in the years to come, under the governance of President Duterte, is certain. The continuing popularity and tremendous support gained by the President from the people serve as the steady wind beneath the wings of this administration to reinforce its resolve to shape the national institution and boost economic growth. Today, we have a leader that possesses the political will to make change happen.

While we surge towards new heights, it is sad to note that some sectors continue to screech in the streets and other venues raising empty brouhahas set to discredit the Duterte administration. And they are the same faces who chant erstwhile mottos and sway salvaged steps picturesque of what they perceive as the “continuing saga between clashing ideologies and forces. But the discontents they illustrate to the public have far been addressed to. It's a fact that they continue to take no notice of and deny. It's for the sake of hurling ruckuses, once a notable political analyst conferred, to demonstrate to their local and foreign funders that “we are still here, alive and kicking.”

I met real people whose lives have changed. A farmer leader from Zamboanga Sibugay told me that their cooperative can now expand services to their members as new farm tools, equipment and sets of training were provided to them by the government, particularly the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR). His organization was among the recipients of the P404 million development assistance handed



over by DAR for the agrarian reform beneficiaries' organizations (ARBOs) in Zamboanga Peninsula. Included in the package of development assistance were the rehabilitation and construction of 13 farm-to-market roads, the building of two communal irrigation systems, the construction of a 28.8 linear meter bridge, and the provision of potable water facilities. Support to increase farm productivity was also a parcel to said development assistance that includes distribu-

tion of rubber seedlings, fertilizers, dispersals for swine production and the provision of farm tools and post-harvest facilities.

During the first three months this year, DAR was able to intensify the distribution of support services to the agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs). On top of these early accomplishments is the continuing distribution of certificates of land ownership award (CLOAs) to thousands of farmers who have been put in irons with the unjust system of tenancy. I saw an ARB jumped for joy while on stage after receiving his CLOA in the province of Rizal; a farmer who kissed the CLOA he received in a distribution ceremony in Makilala, North Cotabato; and an old widow in Iloilo province shedding tears after realizing she already owns the land she toiled for years.

Tangible changes, genuine and existent are here. The accounts presented above are so far related to the efforts of DAR. I am aware that the other agencies of the government are also doing their share to shape the economic and political landscapes of this country. And, like DAR, their achievements are mounting too with veritable, certain impacts into the lives of every Filipino.

Balitang **DAR**

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Ormoc agrarian beneficiaries savor first harvest after 21 years

By Jose Alsmith L. Soria

TIRED BUT happy were the agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) in Barangay Sumanga, Ormoc City as they savored the first harvest of sugarcane on the farm they could finally call their own, the ultimate prize of their 21 years of struggle.

“Masaya kami dahil may income na kami. May pambayad na sa lupa, at matutupad na ang pangarap ng anak ko na makapagtapos ng pag-aaral (We are happy because we now have income. We can now pay land amortization, and my child’s dream to get a college degree will already be realized),” said 55-year-old farmer Pablo Silva, president of the Sumanga United Farmers Association (SUFA).

Silva is among the 24 farmer-recipients of certificates of land ownership award (CLOAs) under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP).

Like many fellow ARBs, their struggle was not a walk in the park. They were subjected to various forms of harassments, bullying and intimidations.

“They were blocked from entering the property by the previous landowner who resisted coverage of the lot under CARP,” Sheila Enciso, Agrarian Reform Regional Director for Eastern



Pablo Silva (2nd from left), president of the Sumanga United Farmers Association discuss his plans with Municipal Agrarian Reform Officer Perpetua Sabaldan (left) and Gilbert Negad (right) of KAISAHAN.

Farmers finally installed

Municipal Agrarian Reform Program Officer Perpetua Sabaldan explained that the 17.5 hectares that ARBs are now farming, is part of the 35-hectare property previously owned by the Potenciano and Anecita Larrazabal Enterprises Corporation (PALEC).

Sabaldan said that out of the 35 hectares, only 12 hectares are currently being planted with root crops by the ARBs.

“Pablo Silva and the 23 other ARBs waited for 19 years to be installed in their awarded land, and two years after, they were able to savor the fruits of their agonizing but otherwise triumphant struggle to own a piece of farmland for each of them,” Sabaldan Said.

Sabaldan narrated that after several attempts, with the combined efforts of DAR, KAISAHAN, a non-government organization assisting them; and the Philippine National Police to install the farmers finally paid off on June 20, 2016, but not after a number of times before because of the landowners stiff resistance.

A bountiful harvest

Before the farmers were installed in their farm lots, the PALEC sought for a dialogue with the ARBs, during which it requested the it be allowed to harvest first the existing crop. After the harvest, PALEC surrendered the land to the ARBs as promised.

Silva shared they expect about 15 truckloads of freshly harvested sugarcane last march 27, with an estimated net income of ₱14,000 for every truckload.

Since it took about 12 months for this crop before it could be harvested, the ARBs had to wait until the current year to experience the success of their struggle.

However, Wowie Silva, 21, who helps his father, Pablo, in farming said it could have been better if the trucks that would transport the harvested sugarcane to the sugar central can enter the area for fast and easy hauling.

Though this is no longer a big deal to Pablo, still he appeals to concerned sectors to help them have an access road.



Visayas recalled in a speech shortly after installing them to their respective farm lots.

Enciso said that through the years, the DAR worked vigorously for the installation of the farmers in their respective farm lots.

The Cane Stalk Story

By Gay S. Visitacion

The one-story coop center that rises in solitary at the middle of a wide-sugarcane land in Barangay Caputatan Sur, Medellin, Cebu used to be a picture of bare and boring organization.

Coop Manager Cresver Ancero recalled that all you could see around the lonely center were just sugarcane stalks.

Inside the concrete 80 square meter-office, Ancero said that they were only 22 ARBs when they started the association in 2002. The San Jose Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Multi-purpose Cooperative (SJARBMPC) whose 172 members are recipients of the landholding formerly owned by Juan Jose Moras. The cooperative was registered with the Cooperative Development Authority on July 22, 2005.

But the meager income of the cooperative then was not enough, particularly as sugarcane planters needed bigger amount as capital for farm operations.

"We have the land title from Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), yet we lack capital to start the farming activities, that is why we enter into a lease agreement with Bogomedellin Company (BOMEDCO) Agricultural Corporation for three (3) years. While it was leased, we were still the ones tilling the land," Ancero said.

In 2005, the coop gained Php 400,000 as profit from the three-year lease of their land, which was used to construct an office building that cost P110,000. Before the year ended, the coop building-training center was completed.

In the same year, with the intention to establish a new business, the organization ventured into dairy farming. Unfortunately, it didn't work because marketing the perishable milk products to Cebu City, with a distance of 112 kilometers from Medellin was difficult.

"This is one failure we encountered but we never lose hope because we know that DAR is always there to support us," Ancero said.

The DAR fully extends its support services to the SJARBMPC in the form of various trainings and mentoring.

In 2006, the coop took the risk of availing itself of P990,000 production loan from DAR's Credit Assistance Program for Program Beneficiaries Development (CAP-PBD) thru the Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP) for sugarcane production.

The cooperative felt the need to purchase a four (4) wheel-drive tractor to improve farm productivity. This was realized in 2009 following the approval of the Php 500,000 loan through LBP.

"Because of the knowledge we had from training and seminars we attended and the desire for more accomplishments, in 2013, the cooperative ventured into hog fattening. An initial of 80 heads of swine at P 2,500 each was purchased to start the business. A 500-square meter hog houses with concrete floors was built. Renewal of loan was made easier because of our outstanding record with the LBP. On the same year, our members decided to acquire a



hauling truck, which cost P 280,000," Ancero exclaimed.

"Through God's grace, there was a fast return of investment due to our regular payment," Ancero said.

When Super typhoon Yolanda struck in November

2013, the whole Medellin town severely hit sugarcane production and hog raising were greatly affected.

"In this trials, DAR was with us. The APCP through Land Bank of the Philippines was launched by DAR in



The APCP program was designed primarily to provide loans to ARBs and ARB households through ARB organizations (ARBOs) and other farmer's organizations to support their communal crop production projects, agri-enterprise, and other livelihood projects.

2014," Ancero said.

The APCP program was designed primarily to provide loans to ARBs and ARB households through ARB organizations (ARBOs) and other farmer's organizations to support their communal crop production projects, agri-enterprise, and other livelihood projects.

The P2M-loan release in 2014 through APCP greatly helped the coop to increase its sugarcane production.

The cooperative paid the loan in full and in 2015, qualified for a second loan cycle, a P3 million loan was granted. This was used as a working capital for the sugarcane production of P2 million while P1 million was used for hog breeding and dispersal.

"Our diligence and perseverance, in addition to the capital we received made the progress of the business," Ancero said.

The extension of credit assistance to ARBs such as CAP-PBD and APCP is a component of the Program Beneficiaries Development that gears towards poverty reduc-

tion in agrarian reform areas.

"We are lucky that the DAR-Cebu chose our coop as recipient of a 10-wheeler dump truck worth Php 5.7 million under the Agrarian Reform Communities Connectivity and Economic Support Services (ARCESS) which was used in our agribusiness activities and harvesting sugarcane under the sugar block farming," Ancero revealed.

Ancero said that the dump truck was of great help to 187 farmer members of the SJARBMPC. "I remember DAR Regional Director Alejandro Otacan congratulating us being included among the qualified recipients of the farm machineries identified nationwide," he added.

The SJARBMPC is now among the more stable organizations in the province of Cebu. From Php 72,800.00 initial paid-up capital, the coop now posts a total asset of more than Php 6.5-million.

Today, the used-to be lifeless place is full of vibrance and the cane stalks is a joy to watch from a distance. ●

Lourdes A. Bitabara: A simple yet visionary farmer leader

By Ruby San Juan

“NAPAKASARAP ng pakiramdam na ang kinakain ko at ng aking pamilya ay ani namin mula sa sariling sakahan at sobra pa para makapag-aral ang aming mga anak at matupad ang aming mga pangangailangan sa buhay,” Said farmer-leader Lourdes A. Bitabara.

Ate Lourdes, the 56 year-old President of the Organization of agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) of Inalsan, Inc. (OARBII), located at Sampasadar-Tandang Kutyo ARC, Sitio Inalsan, Brgy. Tandang Kutyo, Tanay, Rizal, considers herself as successful farmer-beneficiary.

OARBII is an organization engaging in the production and selling of upland rice, banana, cassava and vegetables like tomatoes, ginger, taro and squash, among others.

For her, being successful means living a simple life in the farm, eating fresh produce, being empowered and realizing the dream of bringing success to the OARBII members.

In her own words, she describes her group as “isang matatag na samahang nagkakaisa, may sapat na pinagkakakitaan, nakikipag-ugnayan sa iba’t ibang ahensya ng gobyerno tungo sa maunlad, luntian at masayang pamayanan.” She vows to do all she can to establish a strong organization with sustainable livelihood, adequate facilities, continous linkages with all sectors of society towards development.

The OARBII is one of the co-ARBOs the of Mapunso Upland Farmers Association Inc. (MUFAII), which engages in the cassava production and processing under the Agrarian Reform Community Connectivity and Economic Support Services (ARCESS) in Tanay. The MUFAI was provided with common service facilities (CSF), which include one unit of 35 HP 4WD tractor disc plow with farm implements and one tonner trailer, three power tiller cultivator and one shredder (light duty).

Though Ate Lourdes appreciates all the support that her group gets from the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), she aspires to see her group stand on its rather than share resources considering the distance between her group and MUFAI. The transportation cost are worth



looking at and most importantly, the time spent \ going to and fro are worth looking at.

She dreams of making it big in cassava and saba production and later on, put up a sari-sari store once their bahay-pulungan is constructed.

The Beginning

A native of Magarao, Camarines Sur, Lourdes is the daughter of a rice farmer from Bicol. She worked her way to college by working in a garments factory where she met and eventually married a soldier, Nelson.

With the desire to lead a comfortable life for her family, Lourdes worked abroad to save money to be used as capital for business. She later realized that she could earn more in a buy and sell business than being an OFW.

“Nagsimula kaming mamili ng kalakal mula sa mga kababayan namin sa probinsya na namumuhay sa bundok. Sa murang halaga, pinagkakakitaan namin ang uling, kamote, labong, langka at native na baboy. Taong 1987, kami ay nahikayat ng mga taga-bundok





“

For Ate Lourdes, being successful means living a simple life in the farm, eating fresh produce, being empowered and realizing the dream of bringing success to the OARBII members.

”

na makapagtanim sa mga tiwangwang na lupain. Ang kanilang kaalaman ang naging tanglaw at gabay namin sa pag-unlad ng aming pamumuhay. Kahit na walang kalsada at kuryente, lakad at liwanag lang ng araw ang aming puhunan dito sa bundok, masaya naman at nahiyang din kaming namuhay dito sa Sitio Inalsan,” Lourdes recalls.

Though she ventured as an OFW again in 1988, she found it more fulfilling working here together with the upland communities again. “Nagbalikbayan ako at napakasarap sa kalooban ko ang muling makisalamuha sa mga taga bundok.”

As fate would have it, during her visit to a friend she met sitio coordinators Municipal Agrarian Reform Officers (MARO) Florita Manimtim, Ludiminia Flores and Leticia San Pablo (now all retirees) came with the other farmers, during which she was informed about the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP).

After the meeting, Lourdes continued her work while her husband was planting, raising hogs, and managing a canteen until they were able to buy their own vehicle and a house in Pasig City, and put up a store.

In 2000, the SIFMPC was organized and registered with her as the chairman. That was the time when she finally decided to be a full time farmer. “Sa tulong ng DAR bilang ako ang Chairman ng SIFMPC medyo mahirap nguni’t nakakayanan kong pangatawanan na i-represent ang samahan at nakikipag-ugnayan sa iba pang ahensya ng pamahalaan tungkol sa lupa sa DAR, paghahalaman, sa DA at DTI sa pagnenegosyo.”

“Proud na proud ang aking mga anak lalo na ang aking asawa na ako ay matagumpay na magsasaka na may sapat na puhunang galing na sa ani ng mga lupang dati ay hindi akin. Noong taong 2010, ako ay naging ARB na nabigyan ng lupaing may lawak na 2.4997 ektarya. Ito ang aking ipinagmamalaki pati na rin ng aking mga anak at asawa.”

Looking back, Lourdes described the continued interventions of the DAR as manna from heaven. The assistance came in the form of training and seminars about farming, organizing, processing, community development, and linkaging with other government agencies like DA, PCA, DTI, DOLE, DOST and LGU. The group was also provided farm implements like brush cutter, water pump, knapsack sprayer. She appreciates

the farm-to-market road particularly the improvement of Inalsan to Tuyong Ilog, Tanay-Pinugay Road

Hard work and determination are gradually paying off for President Lourdes. Of her children, one is already a Mechanical Engineering and Marine Engineering graduate, now working as a seafarer. Her youngest is taking up Electronics and Communications Engineering at the Ateneo de Naga University while another child is taking up Electrical Engineering at the Divine World University in Legaspi City.

As a farmer, Lourdes earns as much as P20,000.00 for squash; garlic, 10,000.00; ginger, 2,000.00; bamboo, 2,000.00; banana, 5,000.00; peanut, 1,000.00; coconut, 2,000.00; palay, 10,000.00; corb, 1,000.00; ubi, 1,600.00 or around P45,000.00. For livestock, she earns P120,000.00 cow, hogs, goats and carabao. She boasts of her constant communication with the DAR as an ARB, Barangay Agrarian Reform Committee-member and now, President of the OARBII.

When asked on the difference of her life before CARP and today, Lourdes declared, “Noon sa bayan ako nakatira at marami akong problema sa pamumuhay gaya ng mga bayarin sa bahay, konsumo at iba pang bills; ngunit ngayon, kahit na sa bundok ako namumuhay kung saan mas masaya ako, hindi kami nahihirapan at natutugunan ang aming mga pangangailangan. Ang lahat ng iyon ay dahil sa CARP.”



Western Visayas**Central Iloilo farmers receive P57.6-M road project from DAR**

LAMBUNAO, ILOILO -- The DAR recently turned over to the Lambunao local government unit (LGU) the concreted JNR Agsirab to bagongbong to sitio Agdalusan farm-to-market road project to help improve the economic well-being of the agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) in AGSIBAGO Agrarian Reform Community (ARC) here.

DAR Undersecretary for Support Services Rosalina L. Bistoyong led the turnover ceremony held in Barangay Caguisanan, transferring the management and maintenance of the 7.04-kilometer all-weather road from JNR –Agsirab-bagongbong-sitio Agdalusan road to the Lambunao.

Bistoyong stressed however, that a total development approach must be provided to the agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) such as insurance and capital for farm inputs with 6.5 % interest from the Land Bank of the Philippines to increase the ARBs agricultural production and family income.

She said the JNR –Agsirab-bagongbong-sitio Agdalusan farm to market road would benefit a total of 175 agrarian reform beneficiaries and indigenous peoples (IPs) from neighboring barangays.

Bistoyong reminded the recipients to manage and maintain the infrastructure in good condition to avoid the financial grant from being reverted to loan.

OIC- Provincial Agrarian Reform Program Officer II Sally A. Paulin said the P57.63-million road project was implemented under the Agrarian Reform Communities Project 2 (ARCP 2) grant, now on its second phase.

In his acceptance message, Lambunao Mayor Jason R. Gonzales thanked the DAR for the convenience and advantage that the project would bring to his constituents especially in making the area accessible to other barangays and, thus, opening up livelihood opportunities to the residents in the area.

Antonio Gascon Lacupa, tribal leader of Lambunao Bukidnon IPs Organization in Barangay Caguisanan



thanked the DAR, the Provincial Government of Iloilo and Lambunao LGU for implementing the road project.

Reynaldo Lavilla, 74, and from Sitio Agdalusan, Lambunao, said transporting their goods to the market before was very tough. "Now, it will be much easier and our travel time will be shortened," he added.

The turn-over ceremony was attended by 3rd District of Iloilo Congressman Arthur R. Defensor, Jr., Iloilo

Gov. Arthur R. Defensor, Sr., Lambunao Acting-Vice Mayor Cesar Gonzales, Assistant Regional Director Florentino D. Seladan, OIC-PARPO Sally A. Paulin of Iloilo, Lambunao MARPO Bernadette H. Hisu-an, Agsirab Punong Barangay Wennie L. Catedrilla, Bagongbong Punong Barangay Dhonald C. Agustino, Jayubo Punong Barangay Jeffrey G. Latoza and Caguisanan Punong Barangay Rogelio B. Pastolero.

Cagayan Valley**Cagayan farmers receive farm equipment from DAR**

CARIG SUR, Tuguegaro City— Efforts to improve farmers' agricultural production got a big boost as the DAR turned over P400,000.00 worth of farm equipment to two agrarian reform beneficiaries organizations in Cagayan Province.

DAR Regional Director Homer Tobias said the farm machines and its accessories would help modernize rice and corn farming in Cagayan Province.

The DAR distributed 2 units of hand tractors with 7 horsepower water cooled diesel engine, 2 heavy duty power tillers with cage wheel, a heavy-duty power trailer with 2 pair tire and accessories comprising of belts, pulley, blots, and lubricants to the Pata Multipurpose Cooperative (PMPC) in Claveria.

The Nagatatuan Irrigators Association, Inc. (NIAI) from Gattaran, Cagayan received 2 units of floating tillers with 13 horsepower gasoline engine and standard accessories.

"These farm implements will service more than 300 farmers here. And because the machines are



mechanized, it would make farming easier and faster for them. It will also greatly improve their yield and increase their income," Tobias said.

Tobias explained that the department, through its Support Services Division implements these activities under the Climate Resilient Farm Productivity Support Project (CRFPSP) which aims to improve farm productivity and increase the net income of agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) in a sustainable manner through their organizations.

He encouraged the members of the two cooperatives to be diligent in convincing farmers, especially the ARBs to become members of farm cooperatives.

"One of the conditions in our memorandum of agreement (MOA) is to increase ARB membership in the two ARBOs. We require this condition in order for us to see that your ARBO is strong and united. As a government agency, we want to make sure that the grants we give to our ARBOs will be maximized," Tobias said.

"The DAR can only provide additional support services to an organization if there is a growing ARB membership that will justify the need to deliver more farm machineries and equipment," Tobias added.

After the signing of the MOA, a maintenance training on farm machineries and equipment to the ARBs was conducted at DAR regional grounds to familiarize them with the new farming techniques and tools.

Davao Region

DAR's MINSAAD project launches marketing forum for ARBOs**...leads 1st PARC Excom meeting for 2018**

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distributed to the 6,296 farm-worker beneficiaries of CARP.

"The three accounting firms have already submitted their audit reports to the Supreme Court. We are now awaiting the decision of the Supreme Court on this matter," Pangulayan said.

Also discussed and elevated to the PARC meeting with the President were the following:

1. The proposed composition and powers of the PARC Executive Committee; and
2. Land Bank's report on the status of just compensation cases and adjustments and evaluation guidelines.

...simplifies legal processes

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No. 6657, as amended," he added.

Castriciones emphasized that all cases start by application and no longer by petition. The application shall be accomplished by the applicant, who shall certify under oath as to the truthfulness of all information supplied and as to the authenticity of the requisite documents to be attached.

Castriciones said that all petitions for cancellation of the EP, CLOA, or other title issued under any Agrarian Reform Program based on a final and executory judgment in an ALI case pending before the PARAD, and with an unresolved ALI component pending before the PARAD shall be transferred to the concerned PARPO II for processing in accordance with these rules, with notice to all the parties.

Castriciones cited that all DAR Rules and Procedures on Cancellation of EPs, CLOAs and other titles issued under any agrarian reform program, including DAR A.O. No. 8, Series of 1995, are hereby modified in accordance with this A.O. DAR A.O. No. 6, Series of 2011; DAR A.O. No. 7, Series of 2014; DAR A.O. No. 1, Series of 2017; as well as DAR A.O. No. 6, Series of 2014, are hereby repealed. All other DAR issuances inconsistent with this A.O. are hereby accordingly repealed, modified and/or amended.

DAVAO CITY – The Mindanao Sustainable Agrarian and Agriculture Development (MINSAAD) project of the DAR recently launched its first marketing forum for agrarian reform beneficiary associations, dubbed as "USAPANG KALAKALAN NG DAR-MINSAAD" with the theme "Preparing ARBOs for Marketing Opportunities" at Apo View Hotel in Davao City.

The one-day event was meant to orient ARBOs on market opportunities in Regions 10, 11 and 12, who are engaged in the processing and trading of rice, corn, rubber, peanut, and abaca.

MINSAAD Project Manager Eduardo E. Suaybaguio emphasized that "MINSAAD project is only rekindling its promise to uplift people's lives".

He added that the marketing forum aims to provide a holistic approach to trading the produce of the ARBOs.

The activity was also graced by DAR XI Regional Director Joseph Orilla together with OIC City Agriculturist of Davao City Leo Brian Leuterio and representatives from DAR and other implementing

agencies, as well as from investors and other stakeholders.

Leuterio delivered the message of Davao City Mayor Sara Duterte-Carpio for the occasion.

The MINSAAD project has a time frame of 5 years to implement its programs that will be spearheaded by DAR in cooperation with the Department of Public Works and Highways, National Irrigation Administration and local government units as co-implementing agencies, and the Department of Agriculture, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace Process (OPAPP), National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and MinDA (Mindanao Development Authority) as cooperating agencies.

MINSAAD is now in its 4th year of implementation and currently covers 217 barangays in 27 municipalities spread within Regions 10, 11 and 12 in Mindanao.

● (RS Maala, RIO DAR XI)

DAR, Pilmico forge partnership on agro-entrepreneurship projects for farmers

Bicol Region

NAGA CITY - Livelihood packages, as well as series of technical training, will be provided to selected agrarian reform beneficiaries' organizations (ARBOs) and its farmer-members to increase their household incomes through easy-to-manage businesses with a quick return of investments.

On February 27, the DAR and Pilmico Foods Corporation, the food subsidiary of Aboitiz Foundation Inc. (AFI) recently entered into a memorandum of agreement (MOA) that provide agrarian reform beneficiaries sustainable livelihood and income opportunities across the province.

Under the agreement, Pilmico will provide livelihood packages as well as technical assistance to farmer-recipients, while DAR shall provide microfinance services in the form of loans for their agri-businesses.

The highlight of the activity was the distribution of three piglets to each four farmer-recipients, who are members of the Pacol Magsasaka Prime Community (PMPC) in Naga City.

DAR Undersecretary Bernie Cruz said strengthening and improving partnership with Pilmico is consistent with the DAR's mandate to provide support services such as enterprise development projects to everyone especially those in the countryside.

For her part, Camarines Sur II agrarian reform chief Maria Gracia R. Sales said agreement could do "even more to help the farmers and their organizations to be successful partners for growth."

"I wish these projects would go a long way for our agrarian reform farmers so that they may flourish in their new venture especially on swine and egg produc-



tion, as they are now assured of livelihood packages from Pilmico," Sales said.

Aside from piglet dispersal, Pilmico is also set to provide six kits of egg machines to farmers' organizations to be selected by DAR. Each kit contains 48 heads of ready-to-lay (RTL) hens, galvanized steel cages, feeders, nipple drinkers, water gallon containers, and one-month feed consumption. The succeeding feed requirements will be shouldered by the organization-recipients.

An 'egg machine' is a backyard farming starter kit that allows the continuous production of eggs in a period of 16 months. The Ready-to-Lay hens have a lifespan of 16 months while the cages can last for 10 years. In a day, a flock or kit can produce up to 96 percent of eggs or about 46 eggs per kit.

Said livelihood packages formed part of Pilmico's flagship advocacy program: "Mahalin Pagkaing Atin," a campaign introduced in mid-2014 in support to the government's sustainable entrepreneurship through the promotion of locally produced foods..

Profile of DAR Secretary JOHN R. CASTRICIONES

SECRETARY John Rualo Castriciones graduated as Magna cum Laude with a bachelor's degree in political science at the then Trinity College of Quezon City, now Trinity University of Asia. He studied in the Philippine Military Academy and is a member of the PMA Maharlika Class 1994 before studying law at the San Beda College of Law and Arellano Law School where he was a consistent Dean's Lister. After passing the bar exams in 1990, he pursued further studies and obtained a master's degree in comparative government and international law from the prestigious Notre Dame University in London Law Centre, UK. His masteral thesis, "The Viability and Wisdom of Adopting the Jury System in the Philippines Legal System" earned him a Grade A, which was consequently published in the Arellano Policy Review.

Secretary John is also a tenured professor of



law and the social sciences. Apart from teaching subjects at Xavier School Greenhills for five years, and lecturing to police officers in Philippine Public Safety College, he also taught several law subjects at the Arellano Law School for more than nine years, including Corporate Law, Obligations and Contracts, Sales, Investment Law, Practicum 1 and 2, Legal Ethics, Public and Private International Law and Criminal Procedure. He was also an MCLE lecturer for three years for subjects in International Law, Arbitration Law and Adoption Law, among others.

Moreover, Secretary John has authored several books such as: *Internal Revolution: Political Vengeance and Societal Perdition*, published in 2011, endorsed by Bishop Broderick Pabillo and Fr. Ted Gonzales; *"A Risen Catholic Christian*

Soldier," endorsed by the late Archbishop Cardinal Sin, published in 1998; *Philippine Military Academy Hazing Case: A General's Son Dies*, published in 1990; and *Sagutin Natin*, published in 1984, endorsed by the late Msgr. Cesar F. Solomon and Bishop Pelayo of the military diocese.

For more than 23 years, Secretary John was a law practitioner who appeared in inferior and superior courts throughout the country. During this period, he also served as legal counsel for several corporations and top government

officials in controversial and precedent-setting cases.

In 2009, He served as Director for Investigation, Security and Law Enforcement Services (ISLES) of the Department of Transportation and Communication, and as assistant spokesman and deputy chairman of the Task Force Gabay of the Tagapagligtas sa Karagatan. In the beginning of the current administration, he served as undersecretary for operations for the Department of the Interior and Local Government until his recent appointment.

At present, Department of Agrarian Reform Secretary Castriciones is the national president of Mayor Rodrigo Roa Duterte National Executive Coordinating Committee (MRRD-NECC); and founding senior partner of the Castriciones Legal Consultancy, where his children, who are also lawyers, practice their profession.

