



## 2023-2028 strategic planning underway



**E**xecutive Director John C. de Leon has constituted a team to craft a “refreshed” DA-PhilRice Strategic Plan 2023-2028 with the theme, “Rethinking Rice Security in the New Normal: Sufficient Anywhere.”

They are expected to “craft the immediate, medium-term, and long-term plans pertaining to our R4D, personnel, funding, and governance that will help PhilRice stay strong, relevant, and effective; improve its performance; and become more responsive to the circumstances, underlying trends, and the shifting demands of rice farmers and farming value chain in the country as well as S&T.”

On April 4-5, the team reexamined the institute’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in preparation for the strategic planning workshops.

They also discussed the current situation of the rice industry, national development programs, and the major issues and constraints in rice R4D, extension system, and support services for rice farmers.

De Leon leads the team, with the deputy executive and branch directors serving as co-leads; Dr. Flordeliza H. Bordey as overall chairperson; Dr. Diadem B. Gonzales-Esmero as lead writer; and Dr. Rex L. Navarro as the facilitator.

Thirteen discipline/ divisions form the core group each headed by a leader as follows: Plant Breeding, Norvie L. Manigbas; Crop Biotechnology, Roel R. Suralta; Genetic Resources, Marilyn C. Ferrer; Crop Protection, Edwin C. Martin; Socio-economics, Jesusa C. Beltran; Value-adding, Marissa V. Romero; Agronomy, Leylani M. Juliano; Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering, Ricardo F. Orge; Digital Agriculture, Arturo C. Arocena, Jr. and Sonia L. Asilo; Development, Glenn Y. Ilar and Aurora M. Corales; Business Development, Myline A. Dilla; Branch stations, Rhemilyn R. Sevilla and Sailila E. Abdula; and Administration, Abner T. Montecalvo and Teodora L. Briones.

The core group’s activities will center on the conduct of planning workshops and regional and national stakeholder consultations.

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The team is expected to produce a new plan by December 2022.

A separate team is tasked to document and package the accomplishments and achievements under the seven strategic outcomes of the maturing PhilRice Strategic Plan 2017-2022. An initial terminal report is expected to be available by July 2022.



# Lakbay Palay highlights balanced fertilization



*Lakbay Palay participants express appreciation of the learning they gained during their visit to the institute.*

**A**midst the rising prices of fertilizers in the country, DA-PhilRice launched the balanced fertilization strategy during this dry season Lakbay Palay, April 6-7.

Together with the Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM), Agricultural Training Institute, and Agriculture and Fisheries Information Division, DA's campaign "Abonong Swak (Swak sa badyet, swak sa palay)," was promoted to urge farmers to complement inorganic fertilizer application with organic materials.

Nutrient experts from DA said that organic and biofertilizers could provide the supplemental nutrition needed by the rice crop, and that farmers could also save P2,000 - P4,000 per hectare by using these in combination with inorganic fertilizers.

Organic-inorganic fertilizer combinations based on their budgets and target yields were introduced to the farmers by BSWM Assistant Director Dr. Gina P. Nilo on the first day, and by the institute's nutrient management expert Wilfredo B. Collado on the second day.

The event also featured the soft launch of the DA-PhilRice 360 virtual tour presented by Lorelie Vee C. Domingo. The tour is a self-navigated online platform that features a 360° view of the institute's most commonly visited areas, including the laboratories, farm machine sites, Rice Science Museum, and FutureRice Farm.

Around 500 farmers, partners, and other stakeholders from Ilocos Norte, Isabela, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, Bulacan, Quirino, Ifugao, Aurora,

Bataan, and Zambales benefitted from the educational visit.

The participants toured the evaluation site of rice lines and germplasm, machine display, and Palayamanan for the walk tour; and the model farm, agronomy project, machine demo, and FutureRice Farm for the ride tour.

Led by the Community Relations Office, the Lakbay Palay was held face-to-face for the first time since 2020, following the Nueva Ecija-Interagency Task Force rules and guidelines governing the control and management of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The activity was aired through the Institute's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/DAPhilRice>.



## Bicol establishes new One-Stop Information Shop



*DA-PhilRice Bicol ties up with Artech National Agricultural School in Eastern Samar represented by Renato Picaña, vocational school administrator II, and Domingo Ero, faculty member.*

**D**A-PhilRice Bicol strengthened its information dissemination activities on rice-based farming technologies in Eastern Visayas region, by identifying five farmer association offices to establish the One-Stop Information Shop (OSIS), which complements its distribution of knowledge products in 11 sites. OSIS satellites in campus libraries, farmer associations, and government offices across Regions 5 and 8 extend information on technologies, and on rice and rice-based farming.





**D**A-PhilRice top officials show their commitment and support in the delivery of high-impact research and development initiatives during their recent visits to some branch stations.

Dr. Eduardo Jimmy P. Quilang, deputy executive director (DED) for research, inspected the newly acquired seed production area, on-site research on rice-rice-mungbean, and rice-rice-corn cropping patterns research and demonstration field, and facilities of DA-PhilRice Isabela during its 30th anniversary celebration on Jan. 17-19. He also mentored and coached station officials.

During the 23rd anniversary of Batac station on Feb. 9-11, Quilang proposed ways on how to further improve the Mariano Marcos State University Cares collaborative project; the research for development field's fertilizer derby; the Decision Support System for Agrotechnology modeling; and the plans for the water-harvesting facility, warehouse, and road improvement. He also visited the Rayuray in Batac City and Banna RiceBIS sites.

DED for Administrative Services and Finance Abner T. Montecalvo attended the groundbreaking of the seed warehouse at the University of Southern Mindanao in Kabacan, North Cotabato where the Midsayap station cultivates around 50ha seed production area under a memorandum of agreement with the university. He also visited Central Mindanao University for the improvement of its seed production land.

# Top leaders intensify support for stations



- (1) DED for Research Eduardo Jimmy P. Quilang joins Isabela station in its 30th anniversary.
- (2) DED for Development Karen Eloisa T. Barroga visits Los Baños branch.
- (3) RCEF-PMO Director Flordeliza H. Bordey attended Negros station's retooling on RCEF Seed Delivery and Distribution.
- (4) Executive Director John C. de Leon visits Bicol station during its 11th anniversary.
- (5) DED for Administrative Services and Finance Abner T. Montecalvo at the University of Southern Mindanao.

Dr. Karen Eloisa T. Barroga, DED for development, also visited Los Baños (Jan. 24-25), Bicol (Feb. 21-24), and Negros (Mar. 22-24) to discuss strategic directions in the next five years and to strengthen their development interventions including under RCEF. The visits involved courtesy calls and discussion meetings with local government executives, RiceBIS communities, farmers, and farm school owners.

Dr. Flordeliza H. Bordey, director of the RCEF-Program Management Office, visited: Bicol (Mar. 20-24), Agusan (Mar. 30-Apr. 1), and Negros (Apr. 19-22) to

also attend RCEF seed and extension activities, conduct consultation meetings with seed growers cooperatives, associations, and meet with RCEF staffs from the stations.

Executive Director John C. de Leon visited the facilities and seed production farm of the Isabela station on Jan. 26. He met with Board of Trustees member Romeo Vasquez and the RiceBIS MarDag officials. He also visited the newly acquired Ramon farm of the station. The director also attended Bicol station's 11th anniversary on March 25.



## Rice paddy art honors Filipino farmers



In recognition of the Filipino farmers' achievements in 2021, their record-high palay output is showcased in this year's dry season paddy art at DA-PhilRice's Future Rice Farm.

The farmer's image, along with the 19.96MMT figure, signifies that this accomplishment is through the hard work of our rice farmers.

Another paddy art rendition was created in support of the COMELEC's "Vote S.A.F.E. Pilipinas" campaign.

These rice paddy arts have 128,841 reach on the DA-PhilRice Facebook page garnering almost 700 reactions and more than 150 shares.





# Overcoming seed distribution and extension woes

RCEF Coordinators and their teams were steadfast in conducting rice seed distribution activities under the “new normal” conditions. This required them to establish a good relationship or build a network, especially among legislators, regional and local government units, and farmers.

They struggled with transporting seeds island-to-island, crowd management during seed

distribution, deploying provincial coordinators to avoid travel restrictions and speed up distribution, conducting regular field coaching among farmers, and most importantly, learning local languages for better community integration and communication.

The RCEF Teams from DA-PhilRice branches in Agusan, Bicol, Los Baños, Midsayap, Batac, Isabela, and Negros did all that.

Dr. Jasmin J. Reyes of RCEF Agusan summed it all up: “In government service, succeeding means achieving the desired target and delivering the best for our farmers, keeping focused, and recognizing that obstacles are part of our job in managing and staying on top of various concerns from different stakeholders.”



Los Baños station staff visit beneficiaries of RCEF from Bay and Los Baños, Laguna to gather feedback.



DA PhilRice Isabela awarded three units of seed spreader and two units of drum seeder to five farmer associations in Rizal, Kalinga



DA-PhilRice Bicol held the first PalaySikatan at Burias Island.



Farmer-cooperators of Sta. Cruz, Ilocos Sur join RCEF Batac's PalaySikatan Demonstration.



DA-PhilRice Midsayap Director Sailila E. Abdula (center) leads the RCEF-Seed Program kick-off ceremony in Koronadal City, South Cotabato on March 9.



RCEF staff from Negros station conducted simultaneous soil tests using MOET in Antique, Capiz, and Aklan; and results of the setups will be shared with farmers to help them determine the right amount and element of fertilizers to apply.



Farmers of Bagac, Bataan attend the PalaySikatan techno-demo on March 21.



Farmers from Lala, Lanao del Norte attend RCEF Agusan's 2022 Dry Season PalaySikatan Field Day and Farmers' Forum.



# Women celebrations marked



Batac station celebrates the NWM by sharing gender awareness and empowerment training with partner agencies including the National Tobacco Administration

**D**A-PhilRice celebrated the 2022 National Women's Month (NWM) this March to cap the 6-year recurring theme, "We Make Change Work for Women" focusing on the sub-theme: Agenda ng Kababaihan Tungo sa Kaunlaran.

The institute's activities were aligned with the three-point objectives of the NWM celebration: inform and engage women as stakeholders of government programs and services, create and facilitate platforms to discuss good practices, gaps, challenges, and commitments in pursuing Gender and Development (GAD), and empower women and girls to be agents of change.

The DA-PhilRice GAD Initiatives (GADi) Facebook page was launched as an official page for the institute to share its GAD mainstreaming efforts.

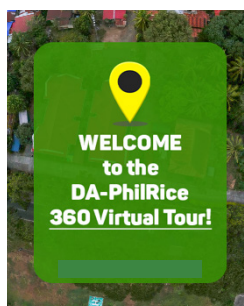
GAD Focal Person Dr. Diadem B. Gonzales-Esmero meanwhile led the Gender Analysis Training among project leaders using a module developed by the institute in consultation with the Philippine Commission on Women.

A webinar, "Leading with Heart! Building Mental Resilience," was also conducted to empower men and women in the rice sector on how to bounce back to the new normal way of life while serving others. Majella Tumangan - Villaroman, an

internationally acclaimed and sought-after speaker on mental health and well-being, served as the resource person.

As part of NWM, the institute continues to strengthen its strategy in promoting women's rights by reconstituting the GAD Focal Point System (GFPS) in compliance with Republic Act No. 9710, otherwise known as the Magna Carta of Women.

Branch stations also showed their support to NWM by conducting GAD orientations, webinars, awareness campaigns, trainings, cooking contests, and social media expositions. (PMC Gabato)



**MAY TANONG TUNGKOL SA  
PAGPAPALAYAN?**  
Magtext o tumawag na sa  
PhilRice Text Center!



Philippine Rice Research Institute  
Central Experiment Station  
Maligaya, Science City of Muñoz, 3119 Nueva Ecija



## EDITORIAL STAFF

**RICE MATTERS** is the bi-monthly newsletter of the Department of Agriculture-Philippine Rice Research Institute that delivers information about the Institute's activities to its partners, and internal and external clients.

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An intensive five-day training capacitated 28 farmer leaders and agricultural technologists from Tagudin, Ilocos Sur in applying integrated pest and nutrient management principles of the PalayCheck System for Irrigated Lowland Rice on Jan. 10-14.

The training, under the RCEF- Rice Extension Services Program, helped improve the farmers' knowledge and skills in accurate pest identification, disease diagnosis, farm management, and fertilizer application.

The trainees also learned the use of ICT-based tools and apps such as Minus-One-Element Technique (MOET), Leaf Color Chart, and Rice Crop Manager Advisory Service.

The training was facilitated by the RCEF Training Management Team in Batac station and the Tagudin LGU.



## Tagudin farmers, agri-techs hone skills in pest, nutrient management



*The trainees establish the MOET setup.*

## Support tools to raise Negros Occidental rice production



*Participants from La Castellana try the MOET.*

DA-PhilRice Negros has partnered with the Central Philippines State University, Northern Negros State College of Science and Technology, and the Provincial Agriculture Office in integrating support tools to help farmers increase their rice yields and reduce production costs.

These support tools include the MOET, MOET App, Leaf Color Chart, LCC App, and Rice Crop Manager Advisory Service.

The local government units of EB Magalona, Calatrava, Don Salvador Benedicto, Murcia, Pontevedra, Hinigaran, and La Castellana are involved in the first leg of this project through focus group discussions and

baseline surveys conducted by DA-PhilRice staff and the CPSU Research team.

This development initiative is under the Knowledge Sharing and Learning: Scaling of Matured Technologies in Nutrient Management to help rice farmers improve their productivity, efficiency, and profitability.





# Awards and Recognitions

## Gantimpala Agad & Pasasalamat Awards

### JANUARY

- Rolando L. Javines, Bicol
- RCEF Procurement and Admin Team
- RCEF Accounting Team

### FEBRUARY

- RCEF Cashiering Team
- Alfonso Bernardo, CES
- Farm Service Center Group
- Bicol Procurement Management Unit
- RCEF Units (all stations)



**Caesar Joventino  
M. Tado, Ph.D.**

*New member,  
Professional Regulatory  
Board of Agricultural and  
Biosystems Engineering*

The Board supervises and regulates the practice of the agricultural and biosystems engineering profession in the Philippines.

## MARCH



**Sophia T. Borja**  
CES



**Guadalupe C.  
Miranda**  
CES



**Richard D.  
Badua**  
RCEF-PMO



**Bicol Financial Management Unit**



**Batac Procurement Management Unit**



**Multi-Crop Reduced-Till Planter  
Research Group**



**RiceBIS Tarlac Team**



Finally, a rice that is infused with vitamin A will soon be served on the tables of Filipino households.

After almost two decades of rigorous research and regulatory review, Golden Rice has fully satisfied all biosafety regulatory requirements in the Philippines.

The biosafety permit for commercial propagation issued in July 2021 was the final stage of regulatory approval, which means that Golden Rice may now be planted on farmers' fields and be eaten by consumers once supply is available.

Golden Rice is just like our ordinary rice, but superior in the sense that it is enriched with beta-carotene, which the body converts into vitamin A as needed. The beta-carotene compound gives this grain its yellow-orange or golden color, hence its name.

It is the first genetically engineered rice with nutritional benefit in the world, and the first in Asia to have been granted a biosafety permit for commercial propagation. The pilot-scale deployment of Golden Rice in the Philippines will open the door for the first direct community or public experience of Golden Rice in the world.

DA-PhilRice has accelerated Golden Rice seed production to ensure the availability of seed planting materials in the nearest time possible. Agriculture Secretary William Dar has instructed DA regional field offices, through Memorandum Order 19 series of 2022, to integrate Golden

## Golden Rice up for deployment



*Dr. Ronan G. Zagado, head of the Golden Rice program, educates Catanduanes farmers and other stakeholders about the variety.*

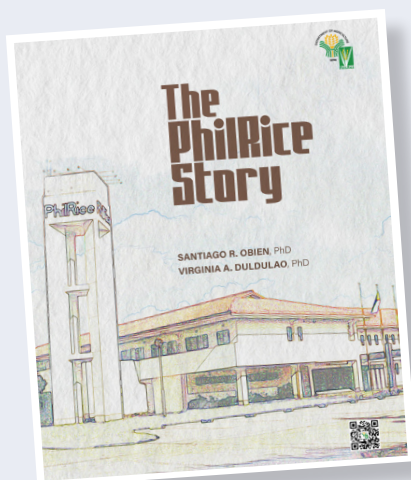
Rice into their seed production and distribution program, particularly to utilize their research experiment stations as seed production areas.

Following the recent approval of the varietal registration of Golden Rice by the National Seed Industry Council (NSIC), the seeds of this variety can now undergo certification by the BPI-National Seed Quality Control Services to ensure that they are of high quality when distributed to farmers.

DA-PhilRice and IRRI, together with their local government partners, aim to initially distribute Golden Rice in

seven targeted provinces including the identified early-planter provinces for expanded seed production. These provinces were identified based on several factors such as stunting rates, inclusion in the list of priority provinces of the National Nutrition Council's Philippine Plan of Action for Nutrition (PPAN), and rice production.

All of these efforts will contribute toward preparing the target communities to own Golden Rice as a complementary intervention to increase vitamin A intake of at-risk populations in line with the food and nutrition security strategies of the DA. (RGZagado) ● ● ●



## Look: The PhilRice Story book is out now!

Millennials and Generation Z youngsters now have a better appreciation of the transitions in the rice landscape and the enduring efforts of the rice R&D rice workers through the "The PhilRice Story" book. This also features an audio book option that can be accessed through the QR code on the book's cover.

Written by DA-PhilRice's first director, Dr. Santiago R. Obien, and Dr. Virginia A. Duldulao, the 30-chapter book documents the institute's journey in serving the Filipino rice farmers and helping the country produce more rice since its inception in 1985.