



Filipinos soon to plant and eat Golden Rice



Philippines is South/Southeast Asia's first country to approve nutrient-enriched "Golden Rice" for planting.

Filipinos are close to benefiting from a Vitamin A-infused rice with the approval of its commercial propagation permit.

Dr. John C. de Leon, executive director of DA-PhilRice, announced that the biosafety permit for propagating the Golden Rice was issued on July 2021 by the DA- Bureau of Plant Industry (DA-BPI).

The permit stipulates that Golden Rice has "undergone satisfactory biosafety assessment pursuant to Joint Department Circular No.1, Series of 2016 of the Departments of Science and Technology, Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources, Health, and Interior and Local Government."

De Leon said that apart from meeting the rigorous standards of biosafety regulation, Golden Rice development followed the standard process of rice breeding, which usually takes 10-12 years before a variety reaches the consumers.

This biosafety approval of Golden Rice is the first authorization for

the commercial propagation of a genetically engineered rice in South and Southeast Asia.

With this permit, de Leon said that Golden Rice can now be planted for commercial production under specific terms and conditions.

He clarified though that Golden Rice will still have to be registered to the National Seed Industry Council based on consistent good agronomic field performance.

"As always, we are committed to ensuring the highest quality of seed for farmers and a safe and nutritious food supply for all Filipinos," the PhilRice chief stressed. He elaborated that a comprehensive quality assurance and stewardship program that covers all steps in the chain from seed production, to postharvest processing, to marketing will be implemented.

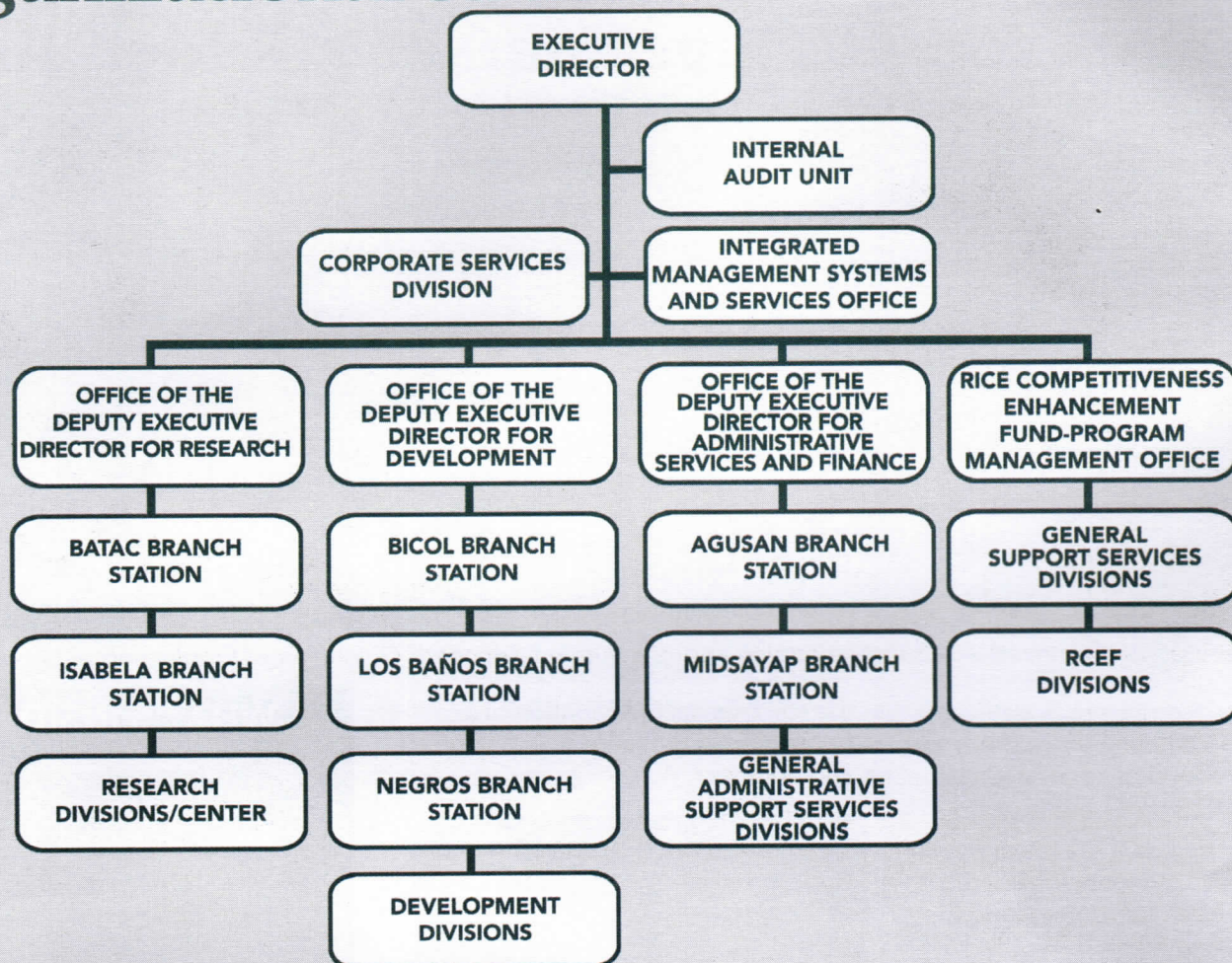
Golden Rice is part of the Healthier Rice Project carried out by DA-PhilRice in partnership with the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI).

...(continued on page 3)

WHAT'S INSIDE?

- 2 Branch stations benefit from new organizational structure
- 3 National Nutrition Month celebrated
- 4 WokTok PalayCheck System Challenge launched
Gulayan in Lupao revitalized
Upcoming Events
- 5 Knowledge upgrade for engineering personnel, laborers
Quezon farmers train on rice seed multiplication, distribution
Batac City Farmers enriched thru knowledge sharing, info materials
Simple hacks to make WFH work
- 6 Farmers train, FCAs support
RiceBIS program
DA-PhilRice, CLSU, Pangasinan provincial gov't firm up rice S&T policies
- 7 Teamwork makes great fieldwork
Gantimpala Agad Awardees
Returning Scholar Designation
- 8 DA-PhilRice's public service at its best, Senator Villar says
Celebrating Arlene's life
Webinars and Videos

Branch stations benefit from new organizational structure



The interim organizational structure for our branch stations are now in effect for seamless decision making, program implementation, communication, and staff engagement. The Bataac and Isabela branch stations are now under

the Office of the Deputy Executive Director (ODED) for Research. Bicol, Los Baños, and Negros report to the ODED for Development. Meanwhile, Agusan and Midsayap stations are under the direction of the ODED for Administrative Services and Finance.

The Board of Trustees recommended these organizational changes during its January 2021 caucus-meeting to hasten organizational communication and collaboration and optimize span of control. 🍌



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



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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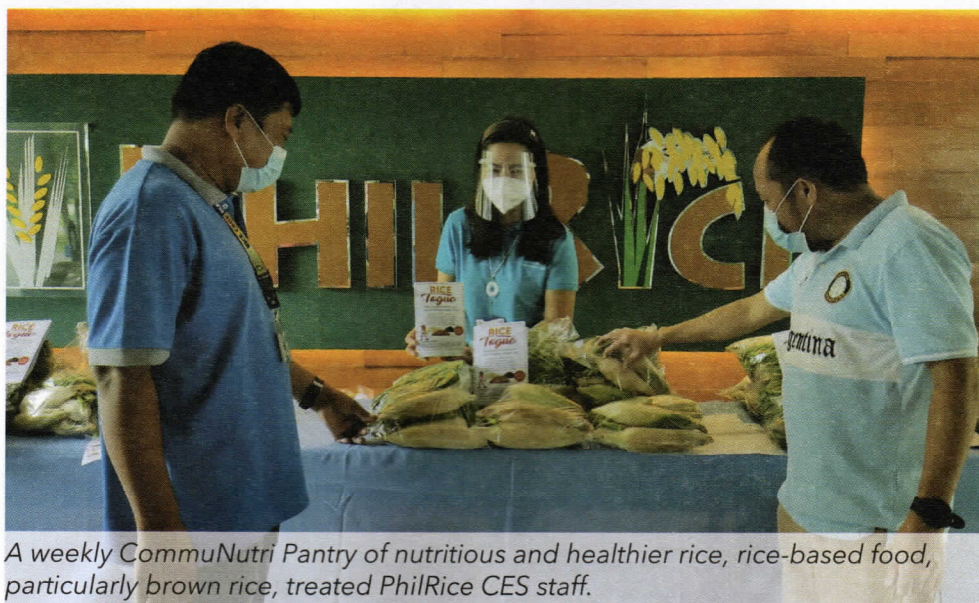
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National Nutrition Month celebrated



A weekly CommuNutri Pantry of nutritious and healthier rice, rice-based food, particularly brown rice, treated PhilRice CES staff.

DA-PhilRice joined the nation in celebrating Nutrition Month in July as it continues to battle the COVID-19 pandemic and in heeding the National Nutrition Council's (NNC) call for "Malnutrisyon patuloy na labanan, first 1,000 days tutukan!"- the theme of the celebration.

The theme emphasizes proper nutrition early on in life as espoused by Republic Act No. 11148 or the Kalusugan at Nutrisyon ng Mag-

Nanay Act of 2018 because "the first 1,000 days of a child is considered the golden window of opportunity for nutrition interventions," food scientist Dr. Marissa V. Romero said.

To celebrate the event, the institute held various activities focused on promoting healthy lifestyles and proper nutrition among PhilRice employees and the general public as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. A live-streamed webinar was held via DA-PhilRice Facebook Page

Filipinos soon...(from page 1)

"Rigorous research and regulatory review has demonstrated that Golden Rice is as safe as ordinary rice with the added benefit of beta-carotene in its grains" says IRRRI Deputy Director for Research Dr. Ajay Kohli. "This milestone approval is the product of cross-cutting collaborative work in the agriculture and nutrition sciences, the public sector, and local farming communities, who are all looking forward to seeing Golden Rice reach the tables of those who need it the most."

De Leon said the remaining few next steps, such as seed increase, will be completed to be able to bring the product forward to farmers and consumers.

He emphasized that Golden Rice is developed for the humanitarian purpose of helping curb vitamin A deficiency.

Hence, it will be deployed in partnership with appropriate agencies through market-based and programmatic approaches (e.g., feeding program) in areas where the deficiency is high.

Studies have shown that a cup of cooked Golden Rice contains enough beta-carotene to meet up to 30-50% of the estimated average requirement of vitamin A for children aged 6 months to 5 years, the group most at risk of vitamin A insufficiency in the

and Zoom, a part of the institute's Lifelong Learning Series No. 12, focused on Lifestyle Modification: Aiding the Battle Against Covid-19, with international board-certified in lifestyle medicine Dr. Marc Dexter M. Macalintal as speaker. Some 245 staff likewise received Palayamanan product packages.

It was more fun at DA-PhilRice on a Brown Rice Monday when brown rice was served for free during lunch for all customers to promote healthier rice. A weekly health-hunting challenge for a food item provided with nutritional identity hidden somewhere in the campus was also held as a form of promotion and awareness among staff. The Eat It to Win, the first online game show designed to disseminate and teach about the health and nutritional benefits of some of the PhilRice-developed rice and rice-based food products such as Nutri Rice Milk, germinated brown rice, and golden rice added merriment to the celebration. 🍌



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Philippines. At present, only 2 out of 10 Filipino households meet the estimated average requirement (EAR) for vitamin A intake in their daily diet.

With its potential to provide a significant amount of vitamin A, Golden Rice can be an effective complementary approach to achieving the DA's vision of availability, affordability, and accessibility of quality and nutritious rice for all Filipinos at all times.

Golden Rice has been assessed for food safety in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, USA, and the Philippines. (CJC Gonzales) 🍌

WokTok PalayCheck System Challenge launched



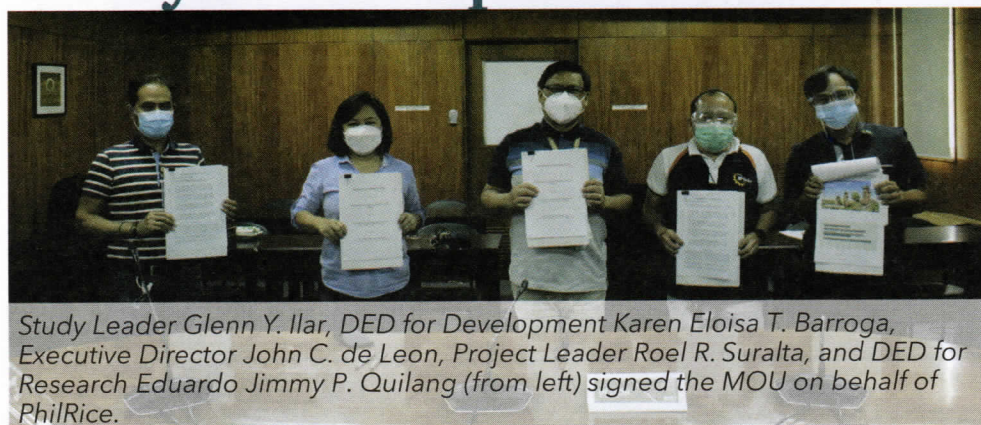
DA-PhilRice has launched the Wok Tok PalayCheck System Challenge to make all staff understand and live up to its technologies integrated into the system.

Staff from CES and seven branches participating in the challenge will have to Wok Tok or "walk the talk" in this game-changer campaign. Executive Director John C. de Leon explained, "this challenge is expected to be seamless and will not be treated as a new activity. The knowledge sharing and learning (KSL) activities are included to mainstream the farm activities and corresponding technologies to all staff and personnel."

The challenge calls for showcasing the PalayCheck System and associated technologies in seed production areas for 2 cropping seasons. To facilitate KSL scoring, 50% of the total CES and branch station populations should have attended the KSL activities for 2021 WS, and the other 50% in the 2022 DS. Judging shall be based on data gathered from the 1-ha PalayCheck field where moisture content is adjusted at 14%, while reduced production cost will be based on the standardized cost-and-returns form. The PalayCheck area evaluation will include yield performance, 40%; cost reduction, 30%; innovations employed, 10%; and conducted KSL activities, 20%.

Crop failure due to typhoons and other natural calamities shall be declared unmet competition's standards. Modifications in the System and technologies/practices integrated in it shall be regarded as innovations. A project committee shall determine the grounds for disqualification of CES and any station's entry. The winning stations will be recognized in a fitting ceremony. 🌱

Gulayan in Lupao revitalized



Study Leader Glenn Y. Ilar, DED for Development Karen Eloisa T. Barroga, Executive Director John C. de Leon, Project Leader Roel R. Suralta, and DED for Research Eduardo Jimmy P. Quilang (from left) signed the MOU on behalf of PhilRice.

The Revitalized Gulayan sa Barangay Project 2 in Nueva Ecija is now in progress following the success of its Phase 1 at Lupao municipality. The project covers

three major components: crop diversification, community food hubs establishment, and East-West Seed-PhilRice rice-veggie techno-demo on Gulayan sa Palayan.

DA-PHILRICE UPCOMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER 2021

14 17th Management Committee Meeting

22 9th RCEF Sectoral meeting

(TBA) 3rd Quarter Reporting on-station Rice Commodity Review (Batac)

OCTOBER 2021

4 6th Research Management Team (RMT) Meeting

6 5th General Administrative Support Services (GASS) Sector Meeting

11-14 Wet Season Lakbay Palay

18 5th Development Sector Meeting

19 Integrated Management Systems Review

The project's implementing guidelines are covered by a Memorandum of Understanding signed by DA-PhilRice, East-West Seed Company, Inc., Municipality of Lupao, and Lupao Vegetable Growers Association on June 24. The DA mandated PhilRice last year to adopt Lupao, which covers 24 barangays, under the revitalized Gulayan sa Barangay Project also called 'Sa Palay at Gulay - May Ani, Hanapbuhay, Oportunidad, at Nutrisyon' (PAG-AHON Phase 1) of the Plant Plant Plant or Ahon Lahat, Pagkain Sapat (ALPAS) Program. Phase 2 runs from June 24 to December 2021. 🌱

Knowledge upgrade for engineering personnel, laborers



The CES-based Rice Engineering and Mechanization Division conducted an orientation and field demonstration on laser-guided land leveling technologies for Isabela station's Agricultural Biosystems Engineering Unit personnel and laborers last May 27. They are expected to share their knowledge on new practices and machines among farmers and other partners. 🍌

Quezon farmers train on rice seed multiplication, distribution



Some 20 farmers from Panukulan, Quezon are now updated on Inbred Rice Seed Multiplication and Distribution after participating in a three-day training conducted by DA-ATI in CALABARZON last May 31-June 2. They were also updated on the Philippine rice industry situation, RCEF-Seed Program, PalayCheck System, mechanics of seed certification, and on field inspection, bagging, piling, sampling, and seed testing. 🍌

Batac City Farmers enriched thru knowledge sharing, info materials



Farmer-members of the Naguilian Irrigators Service Association, Inc. in Batac City recently gained their first Knowledge Sharing and Learning (KSL) on crop management last May 19. They also disclosed their progress as beneficiaries of the program and acquired knowledge and information on new farming technologies, rice pests and diseases during a technical briefing, and received a copy of the Palay Check Primer. 🍌

Simple hacks to make WFH work

by: Shereen R. Francia

Working from home (WFH) can be a great experience since the atmosphere is more familiar, the time more flexible, there are no office distractions like the phone constantly ringing, and you don't have to go through commutes to name a few. On the other hand, working at home presents another set of challenges that can hinder productivity. Imagine having to type a report while the neighbors are doing karaoke in the middle of the day, singing loudly (and off-key at that). Or the temptation of laying in bed and closing your eyes for just a few minutes, which turns, to your horror, into a 3-hour snoring escape! Here are some WFH tips to help you be productive.

Set daily doable goals.

Unfinished work creates a cerebral tension in our mind, also called the Zeigarnik effect (ZE). That is why peppering your day with small, chewable tasks is helpful. What you can do under two minutes, do now. If a pending task is unavoidable, you can easily beat ZE just by investing a minute to plan how to tackle it.



Create a not-to-do list.

Do you get easily high-jacked by unplanned Googling or Messenger GC visits? Then set some limits and focus. For example, don't check social media before 7AM or after 9PM, don't take phone calls when having a meal, check your email twice a day only. Remember that you always have a choice about what you do with your time.

Do you keep forgetting to stand up and drink? Do you get easily distracted while working on something? **Try the Pomodoro Technique** (time management method developed by Francesco Cirillo in late 1980s). Set your timer to 25 minutes of deep, focused work. Your reward: any break of your choosing: water, mini-snack, plant therapy, a funny cat video, or a stretch outside.



Sitting on an uncomfortable chair the whole day can give you a nasty backache. If your supervisor will allow, why not **borrow and take home your office chair?**

Get a good night's sleep. A well-rested body and mind, in the long term, is the solid foundation which our capacity as knowledge workers hinges on.



Farmers train, FCAs support RiceBIS program



More farmers in the regions are fast developing their entrepreneurial mentality as they become more adept in agribusiness, building partnerships, and supporting the DA-PhilRice RiceBIS program.

RiceBIS aims to improve the competitiveness of rice and rice-based farming communities in provinces by addressing farmers' need for resilient, cost-effective and sustainable production, processing and marketing at affordable price.

In Masbate, 150 farmers from Milagros and Mandaon municipalities trained in Agroenterprise Development from June 1 to 10 and produced a feasibility business plan as their final output.

Resource persons from DA-Bureau of Agricultural Research, DA-Regional Field Office V, DA-Agricultural Training Institute (ATI), National Irrigation Administration, Credit Cooperative Authority, Landbank, Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation, DA-PhilMech, Dr. Emilio B. Espinosa Sr. Memorial State College of Agriculture and Technology (DEBESMSCAT), Op-Ag Masbate, and local government units of Milagros and Mandaon conducted the training.

Meanwhile, 10 farmer cooperatives and associations from Alfonso Lista, Ifugao signed a Memorandum of Agreement in a move to support the RiceBIS Phase II project, sustain the province's rice productivity, and strengthen their competitiveness in

rice farming, product development and partnership-building.

Officials from Alfonso Lista, DA Regional Field Office, DA-ATI, DA-DAR Cordillera Administrative Region, DTI, TESDA, and Ifugao State University witnessed the MOA signing.

Earlier, Agusan stakeholders expressed support for the full implementation and transformation of RiceBIS as a holistic program. Branch Director Dr. Caesar Joventino M. Tado and RiceBIS Agusan focal person Sharen T. Rivas met with stakeholders during an onsite and virtual meeting on May 27.

Present in the meeting were CSU Program Coordinator Dr. Rosalinda Sagocsoc, DA-Caraga Regional Seed Coordinator Noli Orog, ATI Training Specialist Violeta Laguna, DTI Provincial Director Brenda Corvera, OIC-Provincial Agriculturist Alvin Aclan, Provincial Rice Coordinator Rodolfo Nalla, LGU-CAO Juvy Pao, Senior Irrigation Development Officer Lourdes B. Dangga, City Agriculture and Fisheries Council Chairperson Dante T. Delagente, Cabadbaran City Agriculturist Ma. Arcelli C. Soria, CDA-Caraga Cooperative Development Specialist II, and Agusan Branch R&D Coordinator Dr. Genevive A. Nemeño.

DA-PhilRice, CLSU, Pangasinan provincial gov't firm up rice S&T policies



Pangasinan Vice Governor Ronald DG Lambino expressed commitment with DA-PhilRice and Central Luzon State University (CLSU) in crafting science-based policy for their farmer-

constituents. On August 11, specific issues affecting local productivity such as the use of quality seeds and integrated crop management were identified as the springboard for

discussion for the local policy-makers to enable them to craft need-based policies for farmers. This will be done through a science and technology (S&T) update among Sangguniang Panlalawigan members. Multi-sector collaboration is also an important element that will be adopted in enabling rice policy implementation in the province, Lambino said. Deputy Executive Director for Development, Dr. Karen Eloisa T. Barroga, and Dr. Jay C. Santos, Acting Dean of the CLSU College of Arts and Sciences facilitated the activity. Community Relations Office leads the S&T updates for policy-makers.

Teamwork makes great field work



(From left, top row) Mario Narca, Jr., Reynaldo Mariñas, Vincent John Castro, June Abrajano, Leomar Fulgencio, Randy Fulgencio, Arsenio Balagot, Jr., Marcelino Sanchez, Valiente Tolentino, Ruben Ariola, Arturo Lagunilla, Aldrin Tolentino, Freddie Pagaduan, Maximo Pimentel, Marvin Concepcion, Edwin Cabanesas, Jose Corpuz. (From left, bottom row) Edwin Mananquil, Bryan Lasquite, Prudencio Vallejo, Albert Fulgencio, Mario dela Cruz, Jonmer Romano, Randy Castro, Danilo Lawagan, Jose Azarcon

The mantra “teamwork makes great field work” works for 27 male field farmers at our Agronomy, Soils, and Plant Physiology Division (ASPPD) who take charge of all farm operations of the 8 core and externally funded projects of the division.

Each laborer maintains his own field experiment, but they also team up when necessary as the nature of the task like transplanting demands. Their activities include bund construction, installation of water pumps, land

preparation, data gathering, fertilizer treatment application, soil and plant sampling and processing, harvesting and processing of yield and yield component samples.

In hot weather, they work on adjusted working time and render overtime voluntarily on weekdays and weekends during tough weather conditions and land preparation when much labor is required. Their bayanihan spirit, resourcefulness, volunteerism, dependability, and outstanding work ethics like reporting and working earlier than normal working hours

make them stand out among other laborer groups. This helped them meet their targets thus receiving verbal commendations from their superiors and Deputy Director for Research, Dr. Eduardo Jimmy P. Quilang.

“I acknowledge those laborers who showed commendable performance. The Division also gives them simple tokens in cash or in kind in recognition of their exemplary performance to keep them motivated at work,” ASPPD Field Supervisor Alex J. Espiritu said. (JA Diamsay)

GANTIMPALA AGAD AWARDEES

MAY



Joel V. Pascual

RiceBIS Bayambang (Pangasinan Team)



Maryjune D. Bulosan



Samuel S. Reyes

JUNE



RCEF Bicol PalaySikatan Team

JULY



Virginia D. Ompad
DA- PhilRice
Los Baños



Fe B. Casupang
DA- PhilRice
Los Baños



Renz Romyl C. De Joya
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CES, TMSD

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Development Coordinating
Council (RRDCC)

DA-PhilRice's public service at its best, Senator Villar says



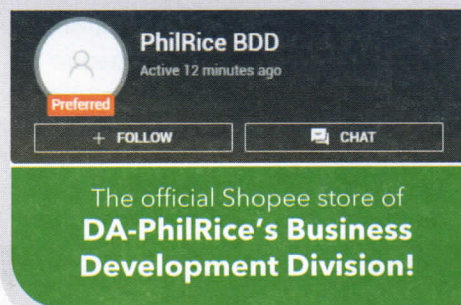
The RCEF- CES Unit was awarded Most Outstanding Unit and the RCEF Units of the Bicol, Agusan, Isabela, Negros, Los Baños, Batangas, and Midsayap branch stations received Special Citations for their "dedicated service and exemplary leadership" in implementing the RCEF-Seed Distribution Programs.

Senator Cynthia A. Villar, chair of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Food, lauded DA-PhilRice for accomplishing its target in delivering high-quality inbred rice seeds, conducting extension work, and innovating its approaches under the RCEF Seed and Extension Programs despite the pandemic. As of August 31, 2021, DA-PhilRice, in coordination with LGU Agricultural

Offices, have distributed more than 7M bags of free certified seeds to almost 1.2M farmers since the inception of the RCEF Seed Program in 2020 dry season (DS). Based on the Institute's Socioeconomics Division monitoring and evaluation survey conducted among RCEF seed beneficiaries, it was found that the yield of the respondents significantly increased from 3.65t/ha in the 2019 DS to 4.22t/ha this 2021

DS. Meanwhile, 98% of them who had access to the communication services said they have applied the knowledge they learned from them.

"This is an example of public service at its best. PhilRice has evolved and responded very well to the needs of the rice industry and the demands of the times. I thank PhilRice for being true to its mandate under RCEF," Villar expressed.



Webinars and videos



PALAYwakin ang Galing Webisodes



National Forum on MP Seeder



Magsasakang Benepisaryo ng RCEF-Seed Program



DA-PhilRice YouTube Channel



PalayKwentuhan: Si Sagib at ang Kanyang mga Paglalakbay

Scan the QR codes with your phone using your camera or QR code scanner to access the files!



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