



Ready for 2023 onwards

DA-PhilRice is ripe for the next years after executing its 2017-2022 strategic plan.

During the past five years, the Institute has increased productivity and profitability by developing 28 new rice varieties with impressive characteristics, corresponding management recommendations, and farm machines.

In 2021, it contributed to the country's record-breaking *palay* output of 19.96 m metric tons.

The Institute and its partners also secured the approval of Golden Rice, a new type of rice that contains beta-carotene, for commercial propagation.

Systems and technologies for rice and rice-farming systems such as the improved *PalayCheck* in irrigated lowland rice, in five agroclimatic zones, in salt-affected rice areas were developed to be able to produce rice at the least expense.

The project –*Sa Palay at Gulay may Ani, Hanapbuhay, Oportunidad at Nutrisyon (PAG-AHON)* –helped rice-based farmers increase their income by 20-30% by marketing their produce in bulk.

Furthermore, the Rice Business Innovations System (RiceBIS) developed 23 communities, organized 215 farmer-clusters, and engaged 6,342 rice farmers covering 9,549ha farm area. The project reported 200% increase in income among RiceBIS communities, which helps farmers market their produce.

DA-PhilRice also sealed more than 1,000 agreements with various stakeholders, national and international, including NutriAsia, MayanaPH, and EastWest Seeds, which helped the Institute in



DA-PhilRice management committee braces for the 2023-2028 strategic plan after the successful implementation of the previous 5-year plan.

implementing development projects that had direct impact on farmers. Thousands of stakeholders were also reached through various engagements, which resulted in better informed farmers and other players in the rice industry.

Under strengthened institutional capability, the Institute created the Procurement Management Division and RCEF-Program Management Office. Fourteen of its human resources were also conferred scientists by the Scientific Career Council.

Amounting to PHP30 million was utilized for registered seed production areas to address the needs of seed growers under the RCEF and DA-National Rice Programs.

The 37-year-old government R&D agency also co-developed cutting-edge technologies and platforms like the Philippine Rice Information System, which is now hailed as a model in Asia on how satellite-based rice monitoring can be harnessed to optimize gains in agriculture.

It also helped craft policies like the truthful labeling of rice, which was

adopted by the Provincial Government of Nueva Ecija as a main ordinance and modeled by other LGUs.

Dr. John de Leon, executive director, said that DA-PhilRice is grateful to the DA family and collaborators for “co-creating many breakthroughs and keeping the Institute’s research, development, and administrative sectors motivated and determined.”

(Christine Mae Nicolas)



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Malusog Rice harvested

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The first harvest will be milled for distribution in target households with pre-school children identified at-risk for vitamin A deficiency (VAD) and undernutrition, as well as pregnant and lactating mothers.

Grateful for the harvest, Antique Gov. Rhodora Cadio said that *Malusog* Rice can be one of the ways to address the province's VAD problem among pre-school and school children.

VAD could lead to poor eyesight and weak immune systems that make children prone to viral infections and other diseases, delayed growth and development.

Farmer-cooperators also showed their support and delight as among the first to produce *Malusog* Rice in their respective provinces.

"As I have observed, Golden Rice (GR) has good quality of seeds, and I want to taste it already. It also has good characteristics in terms of its elongated stem. I was encouraged to be a cooperator of GR to help the government minimize cases of malnutrition," Leo Franco Ebarido, seed grower in Bayugan City, Agusan del Sur, said.

Viga and Virac in Catanduanes had already received promotional packs of *Malusog* Rice as part of the initial household distribution. Catanduanes is one of the seven pilot provinces to receive the beta carotene-enriched variety.

The said province has one of the highest incidences of malnutrition in the country according to the Expanded National Nutrition Survey conducted by the Department of Science and Technology - Food and Nutrition Research Institute.

Distribution activities were conducted in partnership with Department of Agriculture-Philippine Rice Research Institute (DA-PhilRice), International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), and local government units in Catanduanes.

Malusog Rice (Golden Rice) is branded after its first variety registered in the National Seed Industry Council (NSIC) as *Malusog* 1 or NSIC 2022 Rc 682GR2E.

DA-PhilRice and IRRI, in collaboration with partner agencies, are currently multiplying the seeds for commercial production. The current supply will be used for promotion and initial distribution in provinces with high incidence of malnutrition, especially vitamin A deficiency.

Malusog Rice is expected to be fully commercialized at the latter part of 2024 once more seed supply becomes available. (Christopher John Gonzales)



The exhibit booth of the DA-Biotechnology Program Office and CBC features innovations, which support Filipinos' access to safe and beneficial products of biotech.

National Biotechnology Week spotlights business opportunities in biotech

The DA-Crop Biotechnology Center (DA-CBC) featured modern biotechnology studies and products during the 18th National Biotechnology Week (NBW) fair at the Philippine Trade Training Center, Pasay City on Nov. 21-25.

In addition to samples of traditional rice varieties from the Institute's

genebank, DA-CBC promoted technologies from the DA-PhilRice, including Golden Rice, red mold rice, and rice bran oil.

With the theme "Responding to Challenges: Business Opportunities in Biotechnology," the activity hosted by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) intended to spur and

encourage business opportunities in biotechnology to strengthen the supply chain, increase producer and business player competitiveness, and boost national economic growth.

Department of Trade and Industry Secretary Alfredo Pascual emphasized the importance of contemporary biotechnology for economic transformation and recovery.

"Recently, the Philippines earned the badge of regional biotechnology leader with the passage in 2021 of Golden Rice for commercial propagation and Bt Eggplant for direct use," Pascual said.

Recent developments in agricultural biotechnology such as Bt Eggplant and Golden Rice were also acknowledged by Sec. Pascual.

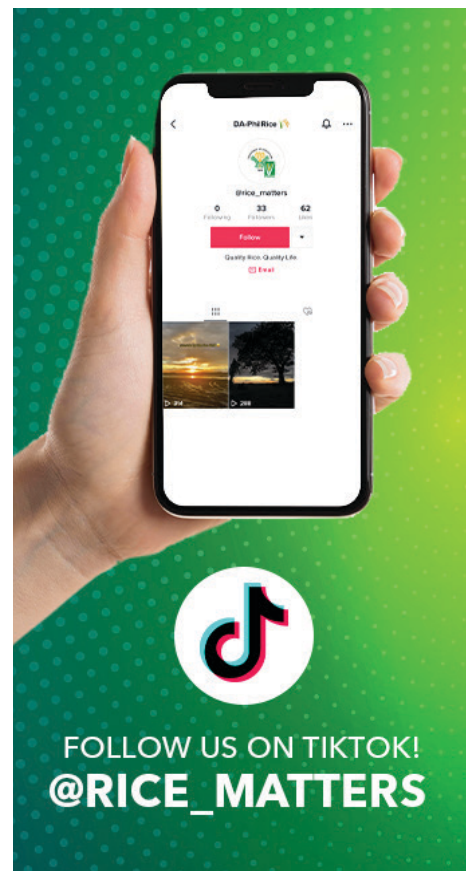
The celebration "Unang Ani ng Golden Rice: Isang Pasasalamat" was held to drumbeat the success of its first farm-level production throughout the nation.

The Department of Agriculture will lead next year's celebration.

(Precious Mae Gabato)



Pledge to be RICEpossible. Pupils from kindergarten to Grade 6 at Maligaya Elementary School in Science City of Muñoz join the celebration of the National Rice Awareness Month (NRAM) on Nov. 25 through the NRAM for kids event. It planted good seeds in the hearts and minds of children through creative presentations: storytelling, games, Zumba dance, and gift-giving of knowledge products for children. The event garnered a 100% satisfactory rate among the young learners who hope that it continues to be an annual activity.





Rice beyond our plates. (L-R) Artists Hermisanto, DA-PhilRice alumna Buts Newingham, and resident artist Sonny Pangilinan launched their three-person exhibit, "Ani ng sining at agham" in the Science City of Muñoz on Dec 14. Hosted by the Tourism Office of the Science City of Muñoz in Nueva Ecija, the exhibit features artworks that used rice grains and hull as a medium. Exhibit runs until Jan 20, 2023.

News from the Branch Stations

Isabela farmer cooperatives laud Golden Rice project

DA-PhilRice Isabela harvested Golden Rice, now officially called *Malusog* Rice, in October to November in Cagayan Valley.

Isabela farmers who are active partners in the program are delighted to have been part of a momentous event. Seed growers and farmer cooperatives have expressed their excitement over the on-going propagation of *Malusog* Rice, which they hope to be available soon for commercialization.

"After harvesting, I want to plant it again, but seeds are not available yet in the market. I am hoping it becomes available soon because it is not only nutritious but also easy to grow," said Ronnie Obra, farmer-cooperator from Saguday, Quirino.

Milled *Malusog* Rice will soon be distributed to partner organizations

and individuals. It has been taste-tested during the National Rice Awareness Month Golden Breakfast contest on Nov. 18 and the culminating on Nov. 28 at Cagayan State University.

Fernando Garcia, project field test supervisor, stressed that *Malusog* Rice is grown like any regular rice. Cultural management practices involve seedling preparation, transplanting, and water management follows the *PalayCheck* System for irrigated lowland rice throughout the planting season.

It undergoes the conventional ways of farming, assuring farmers and other stakeholders that it requires no special care.

Malusog is a unique variety of rice as it was bred to address vitamin A deficiency, a prevalent problem among Filipinos. It has an incidence



Impressed with its good crop performance and nutritional benefits, Isabela farmers are looking forward for the commercialization of the Malusog Rice.

rate of 15.5%, affecting about 2 million Filipino children under the age of five. While unique, it was reported that it tastes similarly to regular white rice. Its major plus is that it contains beta-carotene that the body metabolizes into vitamin A.

(Lea Concepcion Flores)

Persons deprived of liberty now into mushroom cultivation

Persons deprived of liberty (PDL) from the Cabadbaran City District Jail in Agusan del Norte are being upskilled in mushroom propagation and cultivation as a livelihood source.

"The knowledge and skills gained by our PDL in this three-year partnership with DA-PhilRice Agusan will help them in their reintegration into society, particularly in earning income and supporting their families outside of our bureau's custody," Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) Jail Warden Melba Balmore said.

The first session on Oct. 25 introduced mushroom technology, cultivation, propagation, culture media preparation, spawn or fruiting bag preparation and inoculation, substrate processing and formulation using rice straw and sawdust.

Joel, 34, expressed his gratitude saying that the training showed a step-by-step technique, which they could easily follow.



"Not only do we earn money, but we can also be assured that the food we eat is safe," he said.

The BJMP-District received 200 pieces of oyster mushroom fruiting bags on Dec. 7 from the station for the full implementation of oyster mushroom production in the facility using rice straw and sawdust as substrate .

(Cris Mae Necesito)

Farmers linked to market



Farmers from Quezon, Batangas, and Laguna earned more with the DA-PhilRice Los Baños linking them to the consumers at the UP Los Baños (UPLB), Nov. 18-19.

Rhodora Majayjay, president of Majayjay Organic Farmers Association, said that the event was helpful in introducing farmers' products to the market.

"We appreciate our consumers here because they do not bargain for a lower price. They also hope that this will become a weekly activity as the produce are fresh and affordable," she said.

Amazing Foods Owner Jessica Gutierrez said that the event is relevant for them in reaching consumers who prefer healthy foods, which they can supply.

Cooperatives including the Sorosoro Ibaba Development Coop reported an income of PHP30,000 during the two-day event.

Nutritious black and brown rice produced by the Institute's stakeholders were also displayed, and sold.

The activity was part of the month-long National Rice Awareness (NRAM) celebration conducted by DA-PhilRice Los Baños in collaboration with the DA's Kadiwa.

(Kei Asagi)



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SCAN ME

Rice Model Farm to be established in Tawi-Tawi



In support of the Siratang Food Basket Initiative, partnership was sealed among Languyan LGU, MAFAR, and DA-PhilRice Midsayap to establish a rice model farm.

To showcase the performance of high-yielding rice varieties and boost the adoption of location-specific rice production technologies in Tawi-Tawi, a rice model farm will be established in 2023.

This is a joint effort of the Midsayap branch, the local government unit of Languyan headed by Mayor

Abduhasan Ismail Sali, and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Agrarian Reform (MAFAR) Tawi-Tawi.

The farm will rise in Brgy. Darussalam, Languyan in support of the development of some 100-hectare rice areas included in the province's Siratang Food Basket Initiative.

Midsayap Branch Director Ommal Abdulkadil stressed the importance of using high-quality seeds and suitable rice production technologies to enhance the productivity of rice areas during the scoping activity and focus group discussions on Nov. 22.

This was supported by MAFAR Tawi-Tawi Province Chief of Operations Dr. Aida Jumli, who also shared past and current interventions of their office which may be springboards for the new cooperation.

Aside from the technology demonstration, the station will also conduct capacity enhancement activities and localize knowledge products to boost acumen and skills in rice farming, which will help sustain production in the island province.

(Sylvia Therese Quiring)

Pisay students now RICEponsible advocates



Youth advocates of the #BeRICEponsible campaign.

Students from the Philippine Science High School (Pisay)-Bicol Region Campus were encouraged to become #BeRICEponsible advocates during their visit to DA-PhilRice Bicol, Nov. 17.

They were urged not to waste a single grain of rice and appreciate rice farmers by means of thanking and valuing the food they provide to Filipinos.

"I promised to become more RICEponsible in consuming rice as it is not easy to grow it," said Leira Joy Tuyay, Grade 11 Biochem student.

Their adviser, DA-PhilRice Bicol alumnus Gilbert Morente, expressed his gratitude and stressed the importance of rice and rice farmers in nation-building.

"As an educator and a licensed agriculturist, I truly value every grain of rice that is being produced by our cherished farmers. This is exemplified in me by teaching my students to consume rice conscientiously, venerate the local rice farmers, and involve themselves into agriculture," he said.

Aside from a brief *PalayCheck* overview, students learned about cost-reducing rice technologies such as four-wheel tractor, mechanical transplanter, hand tractor, and combine harvester; and ICT-based tools such as *Binhing Palay App*, *Leaf Color Computing App*, *Minus-One-Element Technique App*, and *Rice Doctor*.

(Michael Satuito)



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Cost-reducing rice technologies introduced to Ilonggo farmers

A field walk featuring newly released inbred and hybrid varieties, and discussing the *Abonong Swak* fertilizer options was conducted to promote cost-reducing and yield-increasing technologies for rice production at Brgy. Manguna, Cabatuan, Iloilo on Nov. 25.

Inbred varieties showcased were NSIC Rc 534, Rc 514, Rc 506, Rc 510 and NSIC Rc 490H, Rc 504H for hybrid.

R&D Coordinator Alvin Palanog emphasized the importance of evaluating varieties because this will give farmers options on what's compatible with their needs.

Palanog also explained the feasibility and advantages of following the recommended seeding rate of 40kg/ha, how it reduces cost, and promotes healthier and stronger seedlings. One of the participating farmers, Jenelyn Sangrador, was able to



choose what rice variety to plant next season upon observing the featured varieties. She reported that she follows the 40kg/ha seeding rate.

"At first, I was hesitant in adapting the technology because I thought 40kg of seeds is not enough and I was doubtful that it will have a good crop stand. But as I observed the progress of my crop, I was amazed by the results and I am now convinced that

using the recommended seeding rate is a good choice," she expounded.

The conduct of field walks will continue in other identified sites for technology demonstration such as Patnongon, Antique; Jordan, Guimaras; and Binalbagan, Negros Occidental.

(Rinzo Valdevieso)

Region 1 farmers credit good crop stand to local weather updates

Through the DA-PhilRice Batac Farm Wise project's localized weather updates and advisories, farmers in Region 1 have improved their farm decision-making, which resulted in good crop stands.

The project generates localized weather forecasts and crop advisories, and delivers them to the farmers.

The 10-day localized weather outlook from the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) is

categorized per municipality for Ilocos Norte/Sur, La Union, and Pangasinan.

Data are also published through the DA-PhilRice Batac Facebook page and sent through text blasts.

Crisma Quemquem of Ilocos Norte, one of the text blast recipients, reported that the weather updates are beneficial and convenient in planning her day-to-day decisions such as crop irrigation and the schedule to fertilize. She admitted that the initiative resulted in a good crop stand.

For three seasons, Quemquem had been monitoring the weather outlooks from the Facebook page as references on when to plant seeds, put necessary fertilizers, irrigate, and harvest her produce.

Meanwhile, another recipient Nestor Lacambra said that he is grateful for the information being disseminated as they are being alerted when unprecedented typhoons come.

(Franzel Monique Bonilla)



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Judy Ann Alcala, Bicol

Girle Balingbing, Bicol

Zarah Lyn Tamang, Bicol

Ma. Jemah Retumban, Bicol

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RCEF-Procurement and Admin
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Scaling ICM for salt-affected
areas Project Team, Bicol

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LGU Midsayap: 86th Founding Anniversary

Outstanding Government Service Award
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Best Poster and 2nd Best Paper



RiceBIS Midsayap