



Women commission recognizes PhilRice's GAD mainstreaming initiatives

GLAIZA D. CARRERA

The Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) awarded PhilRice the GADtimpala Silver for Outstanding Gender-Responsive Agency and the GADtimpala Bronze for the Exemplary GAD Focal Point System (GADtimpala AlaGAD) due to its commendable efforts in mainstreaming gender equality, diversity, and social inclusion.

The GADtimpala selection committee, comprising representatives from national government agencies, acknowledged the Institute's achievements in four areas: policy; people; enabling mechanisms; and programs, projects, and activities.

The PCW evaluators noted that PhilRice has effectively addressed gender-specific requirements through its policy implementation. Among these policies are the creation of the project review and evaluation committee, the integration of gender and development attributions into R&D projects, and the enforcement of procedural regulations for GAD-related cases.

The selection committee further confirmed that PhilRice has integrated GAD in its institutional strategic plan mainstreaming gender perspective in its entire operation. They highlighted the use of gender analysis in refining and augmenting PhilRice's policies and programs.

Evaluators also acknowledged the Institute's attribution of 76% of its 2022 annual budget toward the implementation of GAD programs, activities, and projects. They praised the Institute's initiatives in disseminating sex-disaggregated



Philippine Commission on Women validation team with GAD Focal Point System-Technical Working Group Focal Person Dr. Diadem Gonzales-Esmero (3rd from left), explores the rice and its array of rice-based products at PhilRice's Rice Chemistry and Food Science Division, as part of GADtimpala validation.

data and gender-related statistics through online platforms, such as videos, posters, and infographics, as well as during knowledge-sharing and learning events.

PhilRice's receipt of the award was also attributed to its GAD plan and budget developed in accordance with the Department of Agriculture GAD agenda, emerging gender issues informed by the outcomes of gender analysis, and national/international GAD mandates.

The application of gender analysis tools to evaluate the gender-responsiveness of programs, activities, and projects, along with the use of Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials by other agencies, further contributed to the agency's good standing.

"We thank the PCW for this double award. PhilRice has always been supportive of GAD, and we're truly glad that our efforts have been honored twice," said Dr. John de Leon, PhilRice Executive Director.

Moreover, PhilRice GAD has attained a stellar 6-star rating and

named outstanding international best practice in the esteemed 2023 International Best Practice Competition (IBPC), amidst 82 exemplary global practices.

In 2022, they also received Government Best Practice recognition from the Development Academy of the Philippines. 🍌

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Biodiversity conservation thrives at PhilRice

KATRINA JANELLE T. ALARCON

An arboretum has been continuously maintained for three decades in PhilRice central experiment station (CES) with an aim to raise public awareness on biodiversity and ecological practices.

Established in 1991, PhilRice CES maintains a 16-ha land area devoted to the protection of 71 tree species, the majority being native species.

"The rich tapestry here is a testament to the Institute's commitment to building livable, sustainable public spaces for generations even before we were given an ISO certification," Arch. Renato Bajit, head of the Physical Plant Division, said. He led the creation of the woodland with Dr. Santiago Obien, first PhilRice executive director.

Executive Director John de Leon continues to support and uphold this commitment for conservation, ensuring its continuity and further efforts in preserving biodiversity.

Protected trees include Narra (*Pterocarpus indicus*), Molave (*Vitex parviflora*), Kamagong (*Diospyros blancoi*) and Bitao (*Calophyllum inophyllum*), which were planted for their ecological significance as native species.

Planted in 2005, Bitao is a historical connection to the country's richness of fauna as it is a descendant of the Centennial tree discovered in



Renato B. Bajit, head of the Physical Plant Division, emphasizes that connecting with nature has been found to help with mental health concerns such as anxiety and depression.

Magallanes, Agusan del Norte. The parent tree in Agusan is officially recognized as the country's oldest tree and served as a navigational marker for the explorer Ferdinand Magellan upon his arrival in Agusan, according to local folklore.

As birds and bees are important in maintaining biodiversity, flowering trees including the Palawan cherry blossom (*Cassia nodosa*), Fire tree (*Delonix regia*), Banaba (*Lagerstroemia speciosa* L), and Siar (*Peltophorum pterocarpum*) were also planted in the botanical haven.

"The selection and placement of trees within the PhilRice Arboretum go far beyond mere aesthetics. They are carefully selected and placed to enhance the ecological balance and blend seamlessly with the Institute's

buildings. Planting trees on our grounds is not a random act," Bajit said.

A significant number of trees within the Institute have been planted by staffers through tree planting activities.

Within CES, besides the arboretum, is a bamboo park that serves as a venue for activities.

Branch stations also play an integral role in the practice of environmental conservation through their initiatives.

The Midsayap branch station will launch their arboretum for their 35th anniversary.

The Negros branch station also contributes to the cause by hosting an annual tree planting activity within their grounds. 🍌

Stations cited for quick response

DIANA P. LIM

PhilRice in Batac City, Ilocos Norte and San Mateo, Isabela were recipients of the Gantimpala Award in May for their teamwork and resourcefulness.

PhilRice Batac City assisted Isabela station in the prompt delivery of more than 300 bags of hybrid seeds when its truck broke down in Sanchez Mira, Cagayan, which is about seven hours away from the delivery point in Abra.

"We explored all strategies simultaneously: repair, rescue, and rental. The team of Dr. Mary Ann Baradi, Batac City's branch director responded quickly. By midnight, we were already transferring the seeds to Batac's vehicle for transport to Abra.

The tenacity and spirit of public service displayed embody our Institute's core values," Joy Bartolome Duldulao, Isabela branch director, said.

Meanwhile, Executive Director John de Leon said that the commitment to deliver the seeds to the partners and farmers was worth celebrating for.

"Let's mark May 17 and 18 as days of great rescue and commitment between Isabela and Batac stations," he said. 🍌

PhilRice promotes technos for scaling in Masagana Rice Program

ELOUEZA MARIE P. DELA CRUZ & KATRINA JANELLE T. ALARCON

Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice), the country's lead agency on rice research and development, is encouraging stakeholders in the rice industry to scale up technologies to support the Masagana Rice Industry Development Program (MRIDP).

In the Rice Technology Transfer Workshops held nationwide in June, latest farming recommendations and technologies were promoted, including the 40kg/ha seeding rate using appropriate variety and the Philippine Rice Information System (PRISM). Alternate wetting and drying, nutrient management based on balanced fertilization, and the Rice Business Innovations System were also introduced.

"Let us target more users of these technologies. We should now go beyond pilot projects and technology demonstrations and do more location-specific interventions,"

Dr. Leocadio Sebastian, Department of Agriculture undersecretary for Rice Industry Development said.

To scale up the technologies, Sebastian emphasized the need for convergence, cooperation, and coordination between public and private sectors.

Among the agencies urged to advocate for the technologies include the National Irrigation Administration, Bureau of Plant Industry, Climate Resilient Agriculture Office, Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization, Bureau of Soils and Water Management, Agricultural Training Institute, Regional Field Offices, and Philippine/Regional Council for Agriculture and Fisheries, International Rice Research Institute, Rice Board, and state universities and colleges.

Participating cooperatives and farm schools, farmer groups; seed/

fertilizer/drone companies, machine manufacturers; and financial institutions were also tapped to help scale the technologies.

Meanwhile, DA's regional rice focal led the drafting of the technology scaling plans, which are aligned with MRIDP's four-point strategy, simplified in the acrostic Masagana: MATatag - resilience and stability in climate change adaptation; SAmasama - unity and convergence in farm clustering and consolidation; GANado - motivated and enthusiastic farmer entrepreneurs in the value chain; and NApapanahon - timeliness and relevance achieved through digital transformation.

The regional field offices are expected to conduct similar workshops in their coverage area to commence technology scaling while PhilRice will provide technical assistance. 🍌

News from the branch stations

Albay farmers learn about Abonong Swak

AZRYL MAY M. JIMENEZ

Farmers, who are 32-km away from the PhilRice station in Ligao City, Albay, were introduced to Abonong Swak during its recent Lakbay Palay.

"We learned a lot from the discussions here, and these will improve our farm practices. We hope we can come back to PhilRice and learn," said Perla Asaytuno, a 70-year-old farmer.

Abonong Swak promotes strategic nutrient management practices to achieve balanced fertilization, which could help farmers lower their farming expenses. The campaign features organic and inorganic fertilizer combinations to meet farmers' budget and current yield.



A batch of farmers acquires knowledge about inexpensive nutrient management through Abonong Swak combo options.

For example, farmers targeting a yield of 5t normally use eight bags of fertilizer. But based on Abonong Swak computations, 4.5 bags are enough, which could save up to

PhP4,000/ha. The activity also introduced inbred and hybrid varieties such as NSIC Rc 506, Rc 512, and Rc 514. 🍌



RiceBISNARCO officers express gratefulness to the support given by the Negros Occidental Provincial Agriculture Office during the palay-buying operation manual seminar.

Local exec funds RiceBIS community

VANESSA A. TINGSON

Gov. Eugenio Jose Lacson of Negros Occidental extended financial grant to the RiceBIS Negros Agrarian Reform Cooperative (RiceBISNARCO) for its entrepreneurial engagements.

Through the Farmer Entrepreneurship Program that aims to connect farmers to institutional buyers, RiceBISNARCO received PhP250,000 in which 80% of the amount will be used as capital for *palay* buying.

Moreover, 20% of the grant will be allocated in management skills training, seminars, and workshops on bookkeeping and entrepreneurship. The series of training will be facilitated by PhilRice, Department of Agrarian reform, Office of the Provincial Agriculturist (OPA), and Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization (PhilMech).

One of the factors that qualified the farmer-group is its good record in

using and enriching government interventions that members participated in since its registration as a cooperative in 2019.

This includes the PhP1M trust agreements from the Department of Agrarian Reform and PhP5M machinery from PhilMech under the RCEF Mechanization Program.

OPA conducted a seminar on *palay*-buying operations following the turnover of the check. 🍌

Batac City farmers to try machines, decision support tools

FRANZEL MONIQUE D. BONILLA



Farmers are keen to adopting MOET introduced during the Farmer's Festival.

Farmers expressed interest in adopting mechanized direct dry seeding shown during the Farmers' Festival in Batac City, Ilocos Norte.

One of the featured technologies was the multi-purpose seeder (MP seeder), a device attached to a hand tractor that direct-seeds rice, corn, and mungbean.

According to Engr. Richard Pungtilan, Batac City Building Officer and one of the participants, MP seeder is favored because of its seeding rate of 40-60kg/ha. The usual seeding rate practiced by farmers is 100-240kg/ha.

Compared with manual crop establishment that requires two to three farm laborers to seed a hectare, the MP seeder only requires a single operator and could finish seeding in four hours. The technology is expected to reduce rice production costs by 20-30% and to increase net returns by 20-30%, higher than manual broadcasting.

PhilRice experts also introduced fertilizer-saving technologies such as Minus-One-Element Technique (MOET) kit and app, Leaf Color Chart, and Rice Crop Manager. 🍌

Binhi e-Padala streamlines registration

MISHELLE C. DOMINGO

More than 6,000 farmers in CAR and Cagayan Valley have received certified seeds from the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund Program (RCEF) Seed Program for this wet season.

Through Binhi e-Padala, farmers are pre-registered two months before seed distribution starts in September. Eligible farmers will only show their RCEF ID and claim their allotted seeds based on a set schedule.

"For two minutes, we are already pre-registered! Choosing the variety to plant is also easy," Pedro Miguel, president of Bannawag Sur Farmers Association (BSFA) shared.

With the new distribution scheme, Miguel reported an increase in association membership from 60 to 125 farmers.



Members of the Manaoag Small Water Impounding Irrigators Association Inc. in Cauayan City, Isabela who pre-registered in the Binhi e-Padala, are satisfied with the new process.

Thirty cooperatives and associations were pre-registered in Isabela, Cagayan, Quirino, Nueva Vizcaya,

Apayao, Kalinga, and Ifugao and received seeds from the first week of May to second week of June. 🍌

Quezon farmers pioneer Mestiso 20 seed production in Luzon

CHRISTINE M. REYES

Farmer-cooperators in Buenavista, Quezon are now producing hybrid rice seeds resulting in an increased supply in Luzon.

Acknowledged as first seed suppliers of Mestiso 20 (M20) in Luzon, members of the Hagonghong-Bucal Association Alex Simbajon and Buenavista Vice Mayor Rey Rivera are distributing seeds in the area. M20 seeds are usually bought from Mindanao.

With a hectare seed production area in Buenavista, Quezon, Simbajon and Rivera ensures that their practices do not comprise standards set by the Bureau of Plant Industry-National Seed Quality Control Services. Their knowledge and skills are from the accreditation training for two-line hybrid rice seed growers conducted last year by PhilRice in partnership with RFO-CALABARZON and BPI-NSQCS CALABARZON.



PhilRice Los Baños and BPI-NSQCS in CALABARZON inspect and ensure that the Mestiso 20 seeds produced by Alex Simbajon and Buenavista Vice Mayor Rey Rivera are pure and certified.

Farmers cultivating M20 said that the variety has gained popularity among them due to its disease resistance, drought tolerance, high yield potential, and favorable market price.

"M20 did not disappoint me. I gained 7t/ha from the usual 5t/ha yield from inbred rice, which increased

my net profit from Php950/50kg (dried *palay* sold to National Food Authority) to Php2,000/50kg (milled M20). I will plant this variety again as seed source is just within our reach," Marites Mendoza said. 🍌

RiceBIS-assisted coop now seed producers

CRIS MAE T. NECESITO

The Esperanza RiceBIS Producers Cooperative (ESRIPCO) in Agusan del Sur will supply the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) Seed Program with certified inbred seeds in the wet season of 2025.

The cooperative, which started as an association in Esperanza, Agusan del Sur, has already submitted its financial statements as a requirement in the Cooperative Development Authority for obtaining a contract from RCEF.

Through the Rice Business Innovations System (RiceBIS) Program, members were trained on seed production to ensure that seeds will pass certification from the National Seed Quality Control Services.

Cooperative members were also trained on the PalayCheck system. With 27 members, ESRIPCO is an affiliate to the Butuan Seed Producers



The Esperanza RiceBIS Producers Cooperative (ESRIPCO) members discuss with PhilRice team led by Dr. Karen Eloisa Barroga (center 1st row) the strategies on increasing seed production amidst demand for certified inbred seeds.

Cooperative and has been registered with the Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System since April 20.

community,” ESRIPCO Chairman Teodoro Ortega said. 🍌



“With the help of PhilRice and other agencies, we foresee a brighter future and holistic development for our members, families, and the



Hazard-free health prioritized.

Pesticide applicators join the annual physical examination at PhilRice CES on May 2, 3, and 5. As part of the Pesticide Safety Program, the Integrated Management Systems and Services Office, about 60 staffers undergo blood tests, consultation, and chest X-ray routine. Dr. Racquel Quilang, the Institute's medical consultant, provided recommendations and medications based on results. 🍌
ELOUEZA MARIE P. DELA CRUZ



Farmer-Grown Rice Genotypes in the Philippines

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PhilRice in North Cotabato is seeking solon support to enhance access to high-quality seeds and improve production within its coverage area.

Ommal Abdulkadil, Midsayap assistant branch director, proposed a multi-purpose building for funding to Rep. Joselito Saccalan of Cotabato 1st Congressional District. The facility will serve as a farmers' venue and technology demonstration area.

"With the resumption of face-to-face interactions, the facility will play a crucial role in supporting the agricultural community's needs and advancing rice farming practices in the region," Abdulkadil said.

A seed warehouse at the PhilRice-University of Southern Mindanao Seed Farm in Kabacan, Cotabato will soon be completed in time for the next harvest season. 🍌

PhilRice Midsayap seeks to improve station infrastructures

SYLVIA THERESA C. QUIRING



PhilRice Midsayap OIC-Branch Director Ommal Abdulkadil (L) presents a proposal for a multi-purpose building for the station's operational use.

#BeautifulPhilRice 2.0 Mga Kwento sa Litrato

- 📷 Kumuha ng mga litrato na sumasalin sa tema ng bawat buwan gamit ang mobile phone o DSLR camera.
- 📷 Lagyan ng caption ang bawat litrato. Ang caption ay maaaring English o Filipino at dapat na naglalarawan ng kuwento o mensahe na kaugnay ng litratong isinumite. (Minimum of 35 words and maximum of 50 words).
- 📷 Ang kalahok ay maaaring magpasa ng 3-5 litrato kada buwan o tema. Ipadala ito sa philricephotocontest@gmail.com sa pamamagitan ng pag-attach ng JPEG file ng bawat litrato. Isulat sa mensahe ang mga sumusunod: 1. Pangalan ng litratista, 2. Kinabibilangan na Division, 3. Pamagat ng bawat litrato (halimbawa: Carlo Dacumos, Devcom Division, photo1.jpeg "Sa Bukid", photo2.jpeg "Kausap na Cliente", photo3.jpeg "Maayos").
- 📷 Maaaring isali ang mga litrato mula January 2022 basta hindi pa ito nai-post sa social media, nailathala sa ano mang babasahin, o naisumite sa ibang photo contest.
- 📷 Gamitin ang pinakamataas na resolution ng camera.

Ano pa ang hinihintay ninyo? Magkwento na!



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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Awards and recognitions

New Professional Technologists

Professional Regulatory Board of Food Technology



Dr. Riza Abilgos-Ramos
Supervising Science Research
Specialist/Scientist I, CES



Rodel Bulatao
Senior Science Research Specialist, CES

National Academy of Science and Technology

Newly Elected Academician



Dr. Roel Suralta
Chief Science Research
Specialist/Scientist III

Achievement Award
The Asian Scientist 100

Best Paper Awards

19th International Agricultural and Biosystems
Engineering Conference and Exhibition (April 28)



1ST PLACE

AGRICULTURAL DRONES FOR DIRECT SEEDING OF RICE IN THE PHILIPPINES
JGTallada, NLCaballong, MDManalang, MGCSotto, PSRamos, OEManangkil,
and RGTancontian

23rd Philippine Society of Soil Science
and Technology Conference (May 19)



1ST PLACE - JUNIOR CATEGORY

ROOT PLASTICITY EXPRESSION AND SHOOT GROWTH OF RICE UNDER
DROUGHT STRESS SOILS WITH VARIABLE APPLICATION OF PHOSPHORUS
Amabel Achuela and Dr. Roel Suralta



3RD PLACE - SENIOR CATEGORY

DEVELOPMENT OF PRACTICAL APPROACH IN SCALING UP
SILICATE-SOLUBILIZING BACTERIA USE IN CROP PRODUCTION
Jayvee Cruz-Kitma et al.

2023 Outstanding Young Scientist Agricultural Science



Dr. Nonawin Agustin
Project Officer V

MAY- JUNE

Pasasalamat Awardees

Careen Bautista, CES
Aerone Philippe Bautista, CES
Ricky Camus, CES
Herbert Capiral, CES
Florence Tolentino, CES
Desiebel Apuyan, Batac
Lito Batitis, Los Baños

Gantimpala Agad Awardees

Geraldine Rimocal, CES
Rowena Pineda, CES
Irminda De Gracia, CES
RiceBIS Monitoring
and Evaluation Team
Admin-Record Office, CES
PhilRice Batac and Isabela
Human Resource Management
Office, Batac

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