



Celebrating



KATRINA JANELLE T. ALARCON

Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice) is marking its 38th founding anniversary with the theme "Better Rice Communities."

"We celebrate another year of unwavering dedication to our rice farming communities. Our commitment to enhancing their lives has never been stronger. Each one of us has shown relentless determination and continuous improvement in our efforts to support our farmers. Congratulations to us all for elevating our services, fostering growth within our communities, and empowering our stakeholders," Executive Director John de Leon said.

He noted that in a year marked by numerous challenges, the Institute remained resolute, relying on strength and unwavering commitment to its mission. He added that being faithful to ideals and forging partnerships have transformed rice workers and advocates into movement-makers.

Celebrations start on Nov. 6 with a Thanksgiving and Moral Enrichment program to be highlighted by a message from retired PhilRice colleague, Dr. Caesar Tado, and expressions of appreciation and gratitude from staff members.

Mariano Marcos State University (MMSU) President Dr. Shirley Agrupis talks about "leadership par excellence" in the SRO Seminar Series on Nov. 7. In this session, well-seasoned leader-speakers talk

from their own experiences; sharing stories on their failures and successes in institution building, operations, sustainability, and improvement.

On the lighter side, celebrations also include sports competitions, exhibition games featuring staff from CES and branch stations, *Palaro ng Lahi* featuring traditional games, and an employees' fair.

Winners of the sports competitions and #BeautifulPhilRice 2.0 Photo Contest will be announced on Nov. 7.

The anniversary also highlights a "Sana Wall," where staff members are encouraged to post and share

their journeys and contributions to PhilRice.

The anniversary celebrations peak on Nov. 8 during the "Dangal ng PhilRice" awards ceremony. During this event, 39 exceptional employees and teams (permanent and service contractors) will be honored, along with 48 loyalty awardees.

Likewise, those who have received awards from other organizations, continuously served PhilRice for at least 20 years as service contractors, completed academic degrees, published, and received various types of intellectual property will be recognized. 🍌



Jollibee loves Agri. To promote the importance of convergence especially with the private sector, the Jollibee loves Agri was the Rice Paddy Art's feature this wet season at the PhilRice FutureRice Farm. The Jollibee Group Foundation and the DA have agreed to help increase the income of organized groups of farmers through product consolidation. 🍌 **KATRINA JANELLE T. ALARCON**

Rice congress forms partnerships to propel rice sector growth

KATRINA JANELLE T. ALARCON



Executive Director John de Leon (C), along with IRRI Interim Director General and Deputy Director General of Research, Ajay Kohli (R), presents a rice portrait to President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. who encouraged participants to continue identifying solutions for a more robust rice industry during the IRC. This piece of art, created by PhilRice resident artist Sonny Pangilinan, repurposed discarded pigmented rice.

The Institute, in collaboration with the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) and the Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation (PCIC), signed a memorandum of agreement, which focuses on the development of an area-based yield index insurance for rice from satellite data.

Signed during the 6th International Rice Congress (IRC) held at the Philippine International Convention Center on Oct. 16-19, the agreement aims to enhance Filipino farmers' resilience to climatic risks.

"This partnership marks a significant stride toward providing Filipino farmers with insurance protection. This comes at a critical time when we are grappling with severe weather challenges such as droughts and floods, which are exacerbated by climate change. We welcome this collaboration as it aligns with our mission to enhance the well-being of rice-farming communities in the country," Executive Director John de Leon said.

Following IRRI's groundbreaking revelation of genes responsible for

for this milestone discovery. We are already discussing ways on how PhilRice can use this breakthrough on low GI rice toward incorporating this in Philippine varieties."

This development enables the transformation of common rice varieties into healthier, low GI, and ultra-low GI white rice through traditional breeding methods, without compromising quality and yield. This holds promise in addressing the growing rate of diabetes.

With 68-member delegation, the Institute presented 19 oral and poster presentations under the congress, "Accelerating Transformation of Rice-Based Food Systems: From Gene to Globe."

Additionally, thrusts on identifying genes for climate-resilient rice, aiding farmers with climate-smart data, using robotics for precision agriculture, and scaling direct-seeded rice technology were laid down. 🍌

low and ultra-low glycemic index (GI) in rice, DA Undersecretary Leo Sebastian said, "We are keen on supporting the continued research



Boosting the Philippine rice supply chain. In a significant step towards ensuring the nation's rice supply security, the Korea Rural Community Corporation (KRC) and PhilRice, in collaboration with the Global Agricultural Policy Institute (GAPI), and Nature E&T, Inc., held a groundbreaking ceremony on Sept. 26 at the PhilRice CES to celebrate the start of the construction of a seed warehouse with cold storage. This initiative aims to augment the Philippine rice supply chain and extend the shelf-life of perishable agricultural products.

🍌 AUBREY VISTA P. MANALO

Lakbay Palay reaches 50k farmers

ARDIAN M. DOLERA AND AUBREY VISTA P. MANALO



About 50,000 farmers across the country have learned new technologies from the Lakbay Palay conducted at PhilRice CES and its seven branch stations, and livestreamed in the social media from September to October.

Emilita del Rosario, a 60-year-old member of the Joyful Garden Farm Organic Farmers Association and one of the participants, said that they witnessed the performance of new varieties, which have larger grains than varieties they usually grow.

Farmers were also introduced to Palayamanan – a rice-based farming system they can adopt to mitigate the economic effects of El Niño –high-yielding varieties, farm machinery, and digital farming.

With the theme, "Bida ang Sama-sama," the Lakbay Palay in Nueva Ecija served as a platform for forming an alliance through the launch of the "BIDA RiceBIS, Be the rice's best" movement on Sept. 27-28.

At the branch stations, farmers were also briefed on the accomplishments and progress of a government's flagship program through the theme, "RCEF, ano na?"

Lakbay Palay was conducted in Batac on Oct. 25-26; Los Baños, Oct. 23-24;

Agusan, Oct. 13; Negros, Oct. 12-13; Bicol, Sept. 28; Isabela, Sept. 6-8; Midsayap, Aug. 10.

Farmers also encouraged their peers to collaborate to enhance their access to government interventions and market opportunities.

Ariel Dolores, chairperson of Nueva Ecija Seed Growers Multipurpose Cooperative, underscored the need for collaborative efforts and cooperation of agricultural sectors and farmers to have more stability and more progressive farmers.

"Sabihin natin sa ating sarili, taas noo, magsasaka ako. Ating baguhin ang espiritu ng kooperatiba, maging kooperatibang umuunlad sa pagsasaka. Dahil hindi lang bida ang sama-sama, masaya ang sama-sama," he said.

With allocations from the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF), Lakbay Palay was also participated in by students to raise their awareness on the career and entrepreneurial opportunities in agriculture. 🍌



Ties and learnings. In collaboration with the Philippines Rice Board and the Philippine Seed Industry Association (PSIA), the Asia and Pacific Seed Association (APSA) conducts a Hybrid Rice Tour at the PhilRice Central Experiment Station, Sept. 18. Shown here is their visit to the public and private sector hybrid rice demo at the PhilRice FutureRice Farm. The tour aimed to foster cooperation between overseas delegates and local rice entrepreneurs, and enhance participants' understanding of the country's rice farming. This initiative aligns with APSA's mission to sustain agriculture through the production and international trade of high-quality seeds. 🍌 AUBREY VISTA P. MANALO

ISO external audit hurdled

MARK JOSEPH R. ZUÑIGA

The Central Experiment Station has passed its September ISO external audit and is expected to be re-certified with three ISO standards. These are: ISO 9001 Quality Management System; 14001 Environmental MS and 45001 Occupational Health and Safety MS, which are valid for a fresh 3-year period. The Worldwide Quality Assurance (WQA) Philippines conducted the external audit.

All seven branch stations have also passed the same audit, securing ISO 9001 recertification.

This year's audit covered Integrated Management System Standard Requirements, Organization's Own Management System and Applicable Regulatory Requirements, and Use of Logo.

PhilRice is known to be a benchmark among government agencies with ISO-based process standardization.

The Institute has been ISO-certified for the past two decades for exceeding customer expectations, promoting environmental protection, and steering a safe and healthy workplace and workforce.

An ISO Management Standard is a set of globally recognized quality management guidelines that provide organizations with a structure to manage their collective performance. These standards guarantee that a company's products and services are aligned with the needs of its market and clientele. 🍌



PhilRice-HAU MOU advances rice S&T education. The signing of memorandum of understanding between the Holy Angel University in Angeles City, Pampanga led by OIC-President Leopoldo Jaime Valdez (3rd from L) and PhilRice led by Executive Director John de Leon (2nd from L) was held on Sept. 13 at PhilRice CES. Although a private university, HAU has considered it valuable to expose its students to agriculture. Starting with students specializing in digital animation, they will create educational videos on scientific principles behind rice production technologies with guidance from PhilRice experts. The outputs are expected to make learning rice science and technology (S&T) fun and easy. 🍌
KATRINA JANELLE T. ALARCON



Green award. Jean Mirandilla earns the Green Asia Award at the Asian Conference on Remote Sensing (ACRS) held from Oct. 30 to Nov. 3. The award celebrates the innovative use of remote sensing technology and aims to inspire researchers to focus on a more sustainable Asia. The conference, an annual technical gathering hosted by the Asian Association on Remote Sensing and open to participants from around the world, marks the third edition in Taipei and is a significant on-site event, being the first since the pandemic. 🍌
AUBREY VISTA P. MANALO

Over 100,000 bags of RCEF seeds propel early planting in Central Luzon

YOBHEL LOUISSE P. BELTRAN

Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) Seed Program has taken a significant step forward by allocating over 100,000 bags of certified inbred seeds to Central Luzon.

The program began with a kick-off ceremony in five provinces, with 116,000 bags of inbred seeds distributed across 115 municipalities.

Aurora province received 9,940 bags, while Bataan is slated to receive 10,723 bags, Bulacan is set to be provided with 26,808 bags, Pampanga with 27,861 bags, and Zambales in line to receive 10,281 bags.

Each province's kick-off ceremony marks the commencement of seed distribution for the dry season until March 2024.

Nueva Ecija and Tarlac provinces will receive nearly 30,000 certified inbred seeds, with 13,898 bags allocated in Nueva Ecija and 16,038 for 18 municipalities in Tarlac.

Farmers also received knowledge products to enhance their farm productivity and were briefed about RCEF by the implementing agencies. 🍌

DAP compendium to feature DA-PhilRice's GAD mainstreaming

GLAIZA D. CARRERA

Following the Institute's recognition in the 2022 Development Academy of the Philippines (DAP) Gender and Development Plans & Budget recognition, staff from the DAP visited DA-PhilRice to document our outstanding Gender and Development (GAD) mainstreaming as part of DAP's effort to create a comprehensive compendium of government best practices.

"It is never easy to mainstream GAD in an institution, and as we proceeded with the data collection, we witnessed that the PhilRice team truly deserves the awards they received," said Gerard

Paul Calambro, DAP project manager and interviewer, during the exit conference.

This is a sequel to the 2022 DAP activity where PhilRice GAD mainstreaming was named as one of the five winners among 219 contenders.

The DAP production team gathered valuable data and insights on GAD mainstreaming best practices including the challenges encountered and solutions made by the organization, from PhilRice management, members of the GAD focal points system, staff, and farmer-

beneficiaries, through a series of interviews, focus group discussions, and visits to GAD-related facilities and a farming community.

DAP is a premier state institution dedicated to addressing development problems through the generation of new ideas, the capacitation of development stakeholders, and the promotion of partnerships. The compendium will be posted on DAP's website and social media accounts and will also be available in print. It will be promoted by DAP and used as a case study during the conduct of trainings with other organizations. 🍌

Western and Central Visayas LGUs recognized

VANESSA A. TINGSON

PhilRice Negros recently awarded local government units with excellent performance during the 2023 wet season implementation of the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) Seed and Extension programs.

Selection was based on their actual distribution percentage compared to their delivery rate. This assessment considered syncing the physical inventory with the RCEF-Seed Monitoring System and LGU participation during deliberations. LGUs that fully cooperated with the syncing process were commended for their crucial role in seed distribution audits.

Also contributory were their ability to achieve accurate and timely farmer acknowledgment receipts, efficient management of seed stock cards and inventory, and their dedicated efforts in providing manpower and resources for RCEF services.

Bohol was Region 7's Best Province, with Sevilla, Trinidad, and Ubay towns receiving excellence awards in small,

medium, and large-scale categories, respectively.

Aklan was Western Visayas Best Province. LGU-Buruanga and Sibalom received awards in the small and large-scale categories. The medium-scale category recognition was

bestowed on San Enrique in Negros Occidental.

The event was graced by the government officials of the LGU awardees together with their municipal agriculturists and agricultural technologist. 🍌



Micronutrient security amidst global issues. Dr. Ronan Zagado, lead of the Malusog Rice Program, showcases the Philippines' recent introduction of Golden Rice, along with high-zinc and high-iron rice variants, at the Micronutrient Forum in The Hague, Netherlands, Oct. 16-20. The presentation aimed to address nutritional deficiencies in staple diets. The symposium highlighted the importance of fortified rice types in fighting widespread nutritional inadequacies. It provided a crucial platform for leading figures in the field to exchange ideas, share findings, and discuss potential solutions for tackling global malnutrition through fortified food. 🍌

Malusog Rice Project underway in Quirino

LEA CONCEPCION B. FLORES

The pilot-scale deployment of Malusog Rice Project is in progress in Quirino.

Recently, government entities and farmer cooperatives convened to strategize the production and marketing of Malusog Rice from 40ha of clustered farms in Quirino for the 2024 dry season.

Fidela Bongat, PhilRice's project supply lead, outlined the roles of stakeholders, including the identification of irrigated areas by National Irrigation Association (NIA) Quirino, seed propagation assistance by Department of Agriculture-Regional Field Office (DA-RFO) II, and Malusog Rice procurement by LGUs, National Food Authority Region II, Department of Education, Provincial Social Welfare Development Office, Provincial Nutrition Council, and cooperatives to make vitamin A-rich rice accessible to targeted beneficiaries and consumers.

Meanwhile, Provincial rice coordinator Enrique Buenavista pledged the DA-RFO's support through fertilizer discount vouchers for farmers registered in the Registry System for Basic Sectors in Agriculture.

Collaboration is expected with NIA Quirino, PhilRice Isabela, and irrigators' associations.

Furthermore, the Diffun Saranay and Development Cooperative will assist in market testing activities for the Malusog Rice clustered farms. 🍌



PBBM graces rice paddy art launching. Honoring Ilukano leaders, the rice paddy art created by PhilRice and Mariano Marcos State University (MMSU) in Batac City, Ilocos Norte features the image of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. who graced its launching on Sept. 11. The paddy art used a traditional Korean purple rice as paint and the popular green rice variety NSIC Rc 222 as canvas.

🍌 SHANNEL M. CABANSAG

Farm clustering seen to boost farmers' income

CRIS MAE T. NECESITO



Benefits of farm clustering are discussed in the best poster session for the Socioeconomics category during the 27th FPSAP scientific conference.

Farm clustering has increased Agusanon farmers' income with the assistance from Rice Business Innovations System (RiceBIS) Community Program.

Farmers in the expansion sites in Remedios T. Romualdez and Buenavista, Agusan del Norte increased their income by 55.06-61.94% and 28.82-64.01% for wet season 2021 and 28.82-64.01% and 31.31-82.26% for dry season 2022.

RiceBIS expansion partnered with 16 clusters and trained 415 farmers in the PalayCheck System for

Agroenterprise development every cropping season from 2020 wet season to 2022 dry season.

The curriculum of this training was crafted through the needs and problems of farmers in the community or cluster on rice production.

In addition, the PhilRice Agusan RiceBIS team was awarded the Best Poster for the Socioeconomics Category at the 27th Federation of Plant Science Associations of the Philippines (FPSAP) Scientific Conference held in Puerto Princesa, Palawan, from Aug. 27 to Sept. 1. 🍌

RiceBIS prepares implementers for expansion

JENNY ANGELINE B. POCO AND AUBREY VISTA P. MANALO

With more implementers trained on agroenterprise development, more farming communities will soon benefit from the clustering approach in the Rice Business Innovations System (RiceBIS) Program.

In a three-day training course held on Oct. 10-12, 40 implementers worked on expanding the value chain-oriented agroenterprise in its 23 communities nationwide.

They also learned about processing, product generation, marketing, policy, monitoring, and evaluation from trainor Ronnel dela Cruz.

The upgraded RiceBIS program aims to enhance farmers' income by providing them with comprehensive

training and immersion in an all-encompassing learning experience.

A refresher course on agroenterprise development and management for the RiceBIS cluster leaders was held in Bayambang, Pangasinan on Sept. 8. It was attended by 26 cluster leaders and RiceBIS Bayambang Agricultural Cooperative (RBAC) officers.

Meanwhile, 80 RiceBIS farmers of Quirino, Isabela completed their training on Philippine Good Agricultural Practices (PhilGAP) on Sept. 26-27 at Brgy. Isidro Paredes and Sept. 28-29 at Brgy. Bannawag Sur.

In addition, a two-day training on PhilGAP in Trento, Agusan Del Sur covered the importance of product safety and quality, environmental

management, and worker health on Sept. 26-27. It aims to help farmers increase rice production and encourage them to meet standards for product safety.

Also, program implementers and its partners spearheaded the formulation of the cluster development plans of six clustered rice farming communities and other commodities in RT Romualdez, Agusan Del Norte on Sept. 27-28.

Meanwhile, 51 farmers finished a two-day training on PhilGAP for RiceBIS farmers in Midsayap and Libungan, Cotabato, on Oct. 17-18. 🍌

PhilRice Midsayap spearheads Mindanao MRIDP implementation

PhilRice Midsayap co-leads the implementation of Mindanao Cluster Masagana Rice Industry Development program (MRIDP).

Station director Sailila Abdula said the program aims to enhance the dissemination of rice production technologies amid regional challenges.

The Mindanao Cluster MRIDP Workshop, held on Sept. 5-6, in Koronadal City, gathered program implementers and partner agencies to develop rice plans for selected provinces, emphasizing improved production in favorable areas and

addressing challenges in unfavorable regions with consideration to drought forecasts.

Researches on crop management, climate change, and extension services that aim to boost the nation's rice industry were presented.

DA Consultant Frisco Malabanan stressed the significance of irrigation, quality seeds, and proper crop management to boost Mindanao's rice production.

The workshop resulted in draft rice plans from representatives of Cotabato, Zamboanga del Sur,

Bukidnon, and Davao del Norte. These plans will be presented to DA officials for inclusion in the MRIDP.

Abdula expressed commitment to advancing the MRIDP by strengthening collaborations in Mindanao.

Representatives from regional field offices of DA, staffers from Office of Provincial Agriculturists, National Irrigation Administration, and DA consultants were present during the activity. 🍌



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Awards and recognitions



Dangal Ng PhilRice Awards for Excellence

Excellent Performance

BRENA, SUSAN R.
CORALES, RIZAL G.

Excellent Product/Process

BINH E-PADALA SEED DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM
ORYZA GEMS ONLINESATELLITE-BASED RICE MONITORING SYSTEM

AWARDS FOR EXCELLENT PERFORMANCE OF SERVICE CONTRACTORS

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DED IV, CES

DE DIOS, JOVINO L.,
Supervising SRS, CES



BONDAD, ROCHELLE MARIE P., AO IV, Agusan

JULIANO, LEYLANI M., Chief SRS, CES

MANALILI, ROWENA G., Senior SRS, CES

MATAIA, ALICE B., Supervising SRS, CES



AVELLANOZA, ELEANOR S., SRS II, CES

BELTRAN, JESUSA C., Chief SRS/Scientist I, CES

BRENA, SUSAN R., Supervising SRS, CES

CRUZ, RODJASON B., Warehouse II, CES

ESCABARTE, MARIA TERESA A.,
AO III (Cashier II), Midsayap

ESPIRITU, ALEX J., SRS II, CES

GROSPE, FILOMENA S., SRS I, CES

ESTOY JR., GERARDO F.,
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GARCIA, FERNANDO D.,
Supervising SRS, Isabela

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SANTIAGO, GILELY D., Senior SRS, CES

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ABON, JOHN ERIC O., Senior SRS, CES

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AO III, Los Baños

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DELA CRUZ, GIDEON F.,
AO III (Cashier II), Bicol

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PASCUAL, KRISTINE S., Senior SRS, CES

RAMOS, FIDEL M.,
Senior SRS, Isabela

TABUDLONG, BELEN M.,
Senior SRS, Agusan



New PhilRice Scholars

Rona Dollentas, PhD in Soil Science at the University of the Philippines-Los Baños (UPLB); Mel Anthony Talavera, PhD in International Program in Agricultural Development Studies at the University of Tokyo; Arlen Dela Cruz, Masters in Development Management at the Development Academy of the Philippines; and Sandro Cañete, PhD in Soil Science at UPLB, have joined PhilRice's roster of new scholars.

Furthermore, Dollentas and Cañete have been chosen as scholars through the Department of Science and Technology-Accelerated Science and Technology Resource Development Program (DOST-ASTHRDP) while Talavera received the scholarship through Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Knowledge Co-Creation Program (KCCP)-SDGs Global Leader Program. **AUBREY VISTA P. MANALO**