



(A) Department of Agriculture Secretary, Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. reiterated DA's support to Presidential Communications Office (PCO) as it stands united in its pledge to deliver transparent, accurate, and reliable information to the public. (B) Communication heads from various DA agencies participate in the discussion in the Food Security Cluster Communication Workshop 2024, which seeks to broaden and deepen the understanding of government communicators and media practitioners on the administration's food security programs and policies.

## Journos support RICEponsible reporting

AUBREY VISTA P. MANALO

**J**ournalists based in Manila and Nueva Ecija covering agriculture and food-related issues are backing PhilRice's advocacy for credible, "RICEponsible" reporting on rice through data-driven science and technology.

The reporters learned more about credible data sources, which were presented during the Food Security Cluster Communications Workshop spearheaded by the Presidential Communications Office (PCO) on April 3-5 at PhilRice in Nueva Ecija.

Data sources include RiceLytics, which provides data on the status of rice farmers and rice value-chain, and PalayStat, which contains rice-related statistics from PhilRice and the Philippine Statistics Authority.

"These sources empower communities with knowledge, fostering informed decision-making and encouraging active participation in agricultural development. RICEponsible reporting provides journalists with the opportunity to highlight the importance of science and technology in enhancing the country's agricultural sector; thus,

promoting a culture of innovation and progress," Director Julius N. Leonen of the PCO said.

Under the Bagong Pilipinas governance brand of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., the Department of Agriculture is boosting local food security to make agriculture and fisheries profitable for farmers, fishermen, and everyone involved.

"Communication plays a crucial and vital role in the Bagong Pilipinas campaign of President Bongbong Marcos. This workshop is an avenue for greater collaboration among media practitioners and government agencies on effectively delivering information relative to the government's thrusts, programs, and projects," said Laurel.

"We continue to strive for excellence in delivering accurate and reliable information, knowing that our collective work contributes to a brighter and more resilient future for all Filipinos," he added.

The workshop is the first run of the Media Engagement and Workshop Series of Bagong Pilipinas 2024. 🍌

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# Lakbay Palay highlights Bagong Pilipinas rice initiatives

AUBREY VISTA P. MANALO



CES (Day 1)



Negros



Bicol



CES (Day 2)



Isabela



Los Baños

To emphasize the importance of unity and collaboration among Filipino farmers and the rice industry stakeholders, more than 1,000 participants, including farmers, students, extension workers, and researchers, gathered at PhilRice, Nueva Ecija on March 20–21.

The gathering highlighted the active engagement of farmers, agricultural officers, extension workers, representatives from various LGUs, schools, colleges, and universities. Lakbay Palay is a bi-annual farmers' field day and forum, sponsored by the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) Programs run by PhilRice.

The event highlighted PhilRice's significant contributions to Masaganang Bagong Pilipinas, showcasing achievements like the record-breaking rice harvest of 2023.

Farmers were accorded the opportunity to observe rice varieties suited for irrigated fields, learn about climate-responsive technologies and

market connectivity strategies aimed at enhancing their income.

"In previous years, we could only produce 10-12 million metric tons of rice annually. Last year, we exceeded 20 million. With our farmers' ongoing dedication, we aim to surpass this milestone year after year," Executive Director John de Leon said.

On the second day, over 500 high school and college students engaged in discussions about agricultural careers, encouraged to embrace modern farming perspectives and explore diverse opportunities within the sector.

Plant breeder Christopher Cabusora urged the students to shift their traditional view of agriculture as merely about heat and soil, to a modern perspective anchored on innovative technologies and sustainable practices.

Inspired by the theme, "Bida ang sama-sama para sa Masaganang Bagong Pilipinas," Dr. Evaristo A.

Abella, President of Central Luzon State University (CLSU), presented CLSU's initiatives and innovations in providing practical agricultural technologies.

"As we are the only higher educational institution that offers a secondary school that has an agri-based curriculum, we cultivate curiosity to maintain students' interest in joining the agriculture sector. We also provide conventional and cutting-edge agricultural facilities for students and faculty members to effectively conduct research," Abella said.

Through hands-on farm activities, students gain valuable skills and experiences, preparing them for future roles.

Lakbay Palay Dry Season was also conducted in the branch stations, underscoring collaborative efforts with the theme "Bida ang sama-sama"—Isabela on Feb. 15–16; Negros, Apr. 12; and Bicol and Los Baños, Apr. 18. 🍌





## Women empowered

Through the Institute's comprehensive framework on gender mainstreaming, PhilRice's GAD Focal Point System (GFPS) members and project leaders advance gender equality through a training workshop that helps them enhance their comprehension of gender roles, enabling effective interventions for improved management. The workshop empowered leaders to promote inclusivity and equity by enhancing their understanding of gender analysis in Rice for Development. Arlene Pascual, member of the PCW-National GAD Resource Pool, supervising administrative officer at GAD, and Center for Human Rights Education Director, Bataan Peninsula State University, facilitated the training workshop on April 2-4. 🍌

GLAIZA D. CARRERA

# Bicol marks 13 years of excellence

LYNDON A. PEÑA



*Branch Director Victoria Lapitan praised the station's achievements and the team's dedication to serving Bicolano farmers despite challenges like storms, pandemics, and volcanic eruptions. She acknowledged the collaboration within PhilRice Bicol and its partners for overcoming obstacles and reaching remote farming communities.*

**P**hilRice Bicol marked its 13th anniversary on March 21, celebrating a legacy of unwavering commitment to agricultural excellence and the betterment of rice-farming communities.

The branch station has been at the forefront of advancing the development and dissemination of strategies and technologies aimed at making rice and rice-based farming more resilient to climate change.

Over the years, PhilRice Bicol has engaged more than 10,000 clients through various capacity enhancement activities.

It also reached at least 500,000 stakeholders through different technology dissemination modalities and served 201,408 farmers via the RCEF seed program. In 2023,

the station implemented a scalable package of technologies across vulnerable ecosystems for increased productivity and competitiveness.

Branch Director Victoria Lapitan emphasized that the significant accomplishments of PhilRice Bicol were made possible through the collective efforts of the staff and personnel working toward a common goal.

This dedication was acknowledged by various award-giving bodies, who bestowed upon PhilRice Bicol 15 prestigious awards in recognition of their work.

The anniversary celebration was graced by Deputy Executive Director for Development Karen Eloisa Barroga, Deputy ED for Special Concerns Flordeliza Bordey, and Ligao City Vice Mayor Jaypee David. 🍌



## Wonder Women

PhilRice celebrates women's pivotal roles in government service, with the recurring theme "WE for gender equality and inclusive society," introduced in 2023. For 2024, the sub-theme is "Lipunang Patas sa Bagong Pilipinas: Kakayahan ng Kababaihan, Patunayan!" This urges women to thrive without gender biases, showcasing their full potential in national growth and development. PhilRice stations hosted webinars on Gender Sensitivity and empowerment in agro-enterprises within the RiceBIS communities, along with a #PurpleFridays advocacy campaign. Stories of women's contributions to the rice industry are also shared on social media. 🍌

GLAIZA D. CARRERA

# Negros farmers to expand their agribiz

GIRLIE ARANA CARREON AND GILLIAN MERCADO



Quezon Codcod RiceBIS Farmers' Agriculture Cooperative (QUECORIFACO) receives a truck and rice mill equipment as part of Bank of the Philippine Islands Foundation (BPIF) P5.2-million grant for the cooperative.

**T**he Quezon Codcod RiceBIS Farmers' Agriculture Cooperative (QUECORIFACO) in San Carlos City, Negros Occidental on Mar. 19 received a P5.2 million equipment grant to support its expanding agribusiness ventures.

The Bank of the Philippine Islands Foundation (BPIF), Inc. is equipping the organization with enterprise machines that include a truck and a rice mill, which will enhance their transport and production necessities.

"QueCoRiFACo currently comprises five associations with plans to expand their reach across 415 hectares, benefiting over 300 farmers," Anileen Pajarillo of PhilRice Negros said.

"To prepare for this expansion, cooperative members have undergone training in capacity enhancement, packaging and labeling, and good agricultural practices. Soon, their farms will undergo assessment and certification by PhilGAP," Pajarillo reported.

The turnover and blessing ceremony was held in Quezon Multipurpose Gym, San Carlos City, with BPIF Executive Director Ma. Carmina Marquez and other officers. Deputy ED for Development Karen Eloisa Barroga represented PhilRice.

Meanwhile, farmer-leaders shared challenges spanning rice production

to marketing in the launching ceremony of RiceBIS 2.0 in Calauan, Laguna on Mar. 21.

The attendees gained insights into the program's comprehensive

framework, which outlined various components, expected outcomes and the pivotal roles of stakeholders and market partners. The program is after empowering rice-based farming communities. 🌾



## Connecting rice R4DE to communities

PhilRice's Radio and TV Outreach from January to April 2024



**39** Subject Matter Specialists (SMS) enriched radio listeners with rice knowledge across different regions

**25** Radio segment topics discussed

**7** Radio stations across different regions



**5** PhilRice staff appearances featured on major networks

### Objective:

To effectively communicate and disseminate critical agricultural knowledge, science, and technological advancements in rice R4DE to a broad and diverse audience across the Philippines.

From January to April 2024, 39 Subject Matter Specialists (SMS) from PhilRice appeared on various radio stations across the Philippines, broadcasting 25 informative segments. The institute also made a significant impact with five PhilRice staff members appearing on television, showcasing cutting-edge rice technologies. These segments were featured on GMA, DZRH TV, IBC 13, PTV 4, and Net 25.





## Collaborative innovation

Mestiso 20, Mestiso 73, and Mestiso 99 public hybrid rice varieties were showcased by PhilRice Isabela during the field day of the Provincial Rice Technology Forum (PRTF) in Nueva Vizcaya on April 30. It is part of the DA's strategy to increase farmers' yield and productivity, and ensure food sufficiency, availability, accessibility, and affordability of rice. Potential yields of 128 to 234 cavans per hectare are reported for these varieties. More than 500 attended the event including farmers, government personnel, extension workers, and representatives from private seed and fertilizer companies. 🍌

AUBREY VISTA P. MANALO

## "Blockbuster" initiative rolls out in Midsayap

CHESHIRE FAYE R. PAGARIGAN

To address the critical rice production gaps of Region 12, PhilRice Midsayap held inception meetings on March 19-21 to introduce and scale three technologies namely: Alternate Wetting and Drying (AWD), Direct-Seeded Rice (DSR), and saline rice varieties.

In Kiamba, Sarangani, 18 farmer-beneficiaries have already started planting saline rice varieties, a strategic move to combat low rice production in the province's saline environment. This effort is part of PhilRice Midsayap's technology scaling blockbuster project toward prosperous rice farming communities. 🍌



## Easy Access

Tekno Gabay Program continues to provide an avenue for knowledge-sharing to enhance farmers' access to information and technologies as it officially kicked off in March after its successful pilot testing in December 2023. PhilRice technical experts expound on technology recommendations for key rice crop management areas of land preparation, crop establishment, and nutrient and pest management with emphasis on the practice of well-leveled field, 40 kg/ha seeding rate, and right element, amount, and timing of fertilizer application. The Tekno Gabay discussions tackle farmers' questions and field problems. 🍌

AUBREY VISTA P. MANALO

## Farmers boost

The RCEF Seed Program commences its seeds distribution activities in Agusan del Norte by providing more than 18,000 sacks of inbred certified seeds for farmers' use this 2024 wet season in Butuan City, Buenavista, Remedios T. Romualdez, Cabadbaran City, and Kitcharao. The ceremonial turnover of seeds was held at the Bagong Pilipinas Service Fair at Caraga State University, Butuan City. House Speaker Ferdinand Martin Romualdez, Senator Bong Revilla, and city representatives graced the ceremony, along with Branch Director Dr. Gerardo F. Estoy Jr. and agricultural officials.

🍌 CRIS MAE T. NECESITO







# CamSur farmers to adopt rainfed varieties

DENISE BIANCA Y. SADULLO

## Varieties chosen

In a technology demonstration farm known as "rice derby," PhilRice introduced four public hybrid varieties that are less expensive than their private counterparts during the 17th National Rice Technology Forum (NRTF), held in Sto. Domingo, Nueva Ecija, on March 19-21. Among the showcased varieties –PSB Rc 72H (Mestizo 1), Rc 204H (Mestizo 20), Rc 446H (Mestizo 73), and Rc 544H (Mestizo 99) –Mestizo 73 stood out for its good performance: maturing in 113 days; moderate resistance to blast, sheath blight, and green leafhopper; averaging 6.6t/ha and a maximum yield reaching 11.6t/ha.

AUBREY VISTA P. MANALO



Farmers of San Jose, Camarines Sur voted for NSIC Rc 480 as their top preferred variety during the "Lakbay Palay at PalayTalakayan sa Binhing Palay Farm" on March 18. The variety impressed farmers with its excellent crop stand, productive tillers, and long grains.

Other rainfed varieties showcased were NSIC Rc 416, Rc 472, and Rc 568 that also received positive feedback from the farmers due to their resilience to drought. They expressed their enthusiasm to adopt these varieties for the next cropping season.

Binhing Palay farms are being established by the PhilRice Bicol station within the Bicol and Eastern Visayas regions, providing farmers with an immediate source of high-quality inbred rice varieties that can adapt to the environmental stresses in the localities.



## Gains from grains

Farmers under the Rice Business Innovations System (RiceBIS) project in Castillejos, Zambales now have additional sources of income. Ireneo Vilorio and his wife Ching shared their success story, revealing that planting pepper after rice resulted in an additional income of P40,000 from just 384sqm of land. They were among the 100 graduates who completed the season-long training on April 18 facilitated by East-West Seeds and LGU-Castillejos. Led by Sen. Cynthia Villar, the ceremonies were graced by Mayor Jeffrey Khonghun, East West Seeds Philippines Knowledge Transfer Director Stuart Morris, PhilRice Deputy ED for Development Karen Eloisa Barroga, and RiceBIS Program Lead Diadem Gonzales-Esmemo.

AUBREY VISTA P. MANALO





## Shovels in motion

Stakeholders and partners gathered at PhilRice Isabela on March 7 to break ground for the site development and construction of a 540sqm rice warehouse with cold storage. This collaborative effort among the Korea Rural Community Corporation (KRC), Global Agriculture Policy Institute (GAPI), and PhilRice marks a milestone in modernizing rice inventory, storage, and distribution of rice seeds and milled rice. 🍌 **MARIA ASTER JOY A. GARCIA**



## Proven and tested

Farmers in Gerona, Tarlac celebrate abundant harvests at the RCEF PalaySikatan Dry Season Harvest Festival 2024 on March 14. With around 60 farmer-participants, the Festival provided a platform to choose their preferred rice varieties. NSIC Rc 222 was chosen for its high yield with an average of 6.1 t/ha and maximum of 10t/ha. It also has intermediate tolerance to various stresses, pest resistance, and marketability. NSIC Rc 160 was less popular due to lower yield with an average of 5.6 t/ha and a maximum of 8.2 t/ha, and marketing challenges, despite its commendable taste. 🍌 **AUBREY VISTA P. MANALO**



## Climate Change talk

To create awareness and understanding of the effects of Climate Change, the DA-Crop Biotechnology Center (DA-CBC) in collaboration with the Genetic Resources Division (GRD) held the "International Symposium on Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation for Sustainable Agriculture," on March 3 at the DA-CBC plenary hall.

The symposium discussed the potential of genes and fertilization practices to modify plant root system architecture for climate resilience and mitigation. It also discussed the Philippines' experience in developing climate-resilient crops, the importance of roots research, modern breeding techniques, and the socio-economic factors of rice farmers in drought adaptation. Dr. Roel Suralta, chief of DA-CBC, Dr. Eduardo Jimmy Quilang, PhilRice Deputy ED for research, and Dr. Akira Yamauchi, director of Asian Satellite Campus in Nagoya University, Japan graced the event.

🍌 **BENSON Z. MUNAR**



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# Awards and recognitions



## Visayas State University Centennial Founding Anniversary Outstanding Viscan Award



**Dr. Roel R. Suralta**, Chief SRS/ Scientist III, for Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability;  
**Dr. Ricardo F. Orge**, Supervising SRS/Scientist III and **Dindo King M. Donayre**, Senior SRS/ Scientist I,  
for Science, Technology, and Innovation .

## Passed the 1st Quality Management Systems (QMS) Surveillance Audit



**PhilRice Agusan**



## MARCH-APRIL ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

### MARCH

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>4</b> Bicol and Los Baños: Women's Month Kick-off                           | <b>5</b> Batac: RMC in Ilocos   |
| <b>4-8</b> Batac: 2024 Wet Season RCEF Social Mobilization                     | <b>11</b> Batac: Internal Audit Team Orientation  |
| <b>7</b> Los Baños: RCEF LGU Awarding  | <b>11</b> Los Baños: RCEF Retooling Workshop and Awarding in Marinduque                   |
| <b>7</b> Isabela: Groundbreaking of Rice Warehouse with Cold Storage           | <b>15-20</b> Batac: 1st Batch Training of Trainers on Headquarters in Ilocos Sur          |
| <b>8</b> Bicol: International Women's Day Celebration                          | <b>16</b> Bicol: Lakkbay Palay  |
| <b>8</b> Batac: Seminar on GAD Basic Concepts for new staff/personnel          | <b>16-17</b> Los Baños: RCEF Retooling Workshop in Quezon                                 |
| <b>12</b> Bicol: Lakkbay Palay (Tiwi)  | <b>18</b> Los Baños: 2024 DS Lakkbay Palay in Mindoro Satellite Station                   |
| <b>12-15</b> Batac: Communication Needs Assessment (Ilocos Sur and Pangasinan) | <b>19</b> Los Baños: RCEF Retooling Workshop and Awarding in Sablayan, Occidental Mindoro |
| <b>13-15</b> Agusan: Management Review and GASS Mentoring/Coaching             | <b>Apr 21 -May 3</b> Batac: 2nd Batch Training on Trainers on Headquarters in Ilocos Sur  |
| <b>18-22</b> Negros: Quality Management Systems Audit                          | <b>22-26</b> Bicol: Quality Management Systems Audit                                      |
| <b>19</b> Batac: Warehouse Groundbreaking                                      | <b>23-24</b> Agusan: Quality Management Systems Surveillance Audit                        |
| <b>20-21</b> CES: Lakkbay Palay  | <b>27</b> CES: COA Exit Conference  |
| <b>21</b> Los Baños: RiceBIS Launching   | <b>30</b> Los Baños: RCEF Retooling Workshop and Awarding in Romblon                      |
| <b>21</b> Bicol: 13th Founding Anniversary                                     |   |
| <b>25-27</b> CES: GAD Focal Point System and Project Leaders' Training         |   |

### APRIL

- 3-4** Los Baños: PhilRice-UPLB Workshop
- 3-5** CES: Food Security Cluster Communications Workshop
- 5** Batac: RCEF KSL Anda

## Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines (IPOP HL)

## Platinum Award

3rd Innovation and Technology  
Support Office (ITSO) President's Summit



**DA-Philippine Rice Research Institute**

## Gantimpala Agad Awardees PhilRice Isabela RiceBIS Team

## Pasasalamat Awardees

**Dennis G. Cargamento, CES**

**Jeric L. Dela Cruz, CES**

**Marnielita Grace P. Sante, CES**

**PhilRice Isabela Photo  
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