



## PhilRice passes assessment for CSC PRIME Level III

AUBREY VISTA P. MANALO

The Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice) in its effort to promote people excellence for efficient and effective delivery of public service, passed the assessment from the Civil Service Commission-National Capital Region (CSC-NCR) for the requirements of Maturity Level III under the Program to Institutionalize Meritocracy and Excellence in Human Resource Management (PRIME-HRM), on June 28.

Under the PRIME-HRM, PhilRice HRMO was recognized for having integrated all the four core systems on recruitment, selection and placement, performance management, learning and development, and rewards and recognition. A final resolution for the



CSC proper will pave the way for the silver award in PRIME-HRM.

The silver award, once granted, will have several incentives for PhilRice, including the authority to approve appointments subject to post-audit, a 25% discount on CSC training

and conferences, and eligibility for scholarship grants and CSC certification programs. Also, the Institute will now be exempted from the section 96 of the 2017 Omnibus Rules on Appointments and other Human Resource activities, among others.

## Sen. Villar cites PhilRice anew

AUBREY VISTA P. MANALO

Senator Cynthia A. Villar, chair of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Food, praised PhilRice for effectively implementing the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) Seed and Rice Extension Services Programs during the senate hearing on May 14.

Villar highlighted PhilRice's achievements, noting substantial increases in farmers' yields largely resulting from the extensive distribution of inbred certified seeds.

"I've been the chair of the committee for eleven years, and I can tell you that the best agency I've seen so far in the Department of Agriculture is PhilRice. I truly salute PhilRice," Villar enunciated.

As the five-year implementation of the RCEF programs concludes this year, Villar announced in the 2023



PhilRice RCEF Seed & Extension Program Annual Review last Feb. 6, her intention to have them extended.

She emphasized the need to assess the programs' impact on agricultural productivity to justify their continuation. The RCEF Seed and Rice Extension Services are integral parts of Republic Act 11203 or the Rice Tariffication Law, which allocates a yearly P10 billion fund. 🍌

PRIME-HRM fosters expertise exchange and highlights best practices in HR management across government agencies. 🍌

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# Innovative Rice Solutions



The Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice) joins the roundtable discussion, titled, "Rice and Shine: Bigas para sa Bayan," that focused on strategies to lower rice prices while sustaining agricultural productivity, led by Sen. Imee R. Marcos, on June 6. Together with leaders from the International Rice

Research Institute (IRRI), Nueva Segovia Consortium of Cooperatives, National Irrigation Administration (NIA), Philippine Rice Industry Stakeholders Movement (PRISM), Federation of Free Farmers, and Philippine Statistical Association Incorporation (PSAI), key strategies were discussed including enhancing farmer efficiency through mechanization, automation, direct-seeded rice, and improved pest and disease management.

"PhilRice was established in 1985. Throughout the years, we have supported data showing that we increased rice production by 127%. There is clear evidence of how much our varieties have improved through extensive research and development activities," Executive Director John C. de Leon stated.

Senator Marcos also visited the Rice Science Museum, and featured the Institutes' agricultural artifacts and models showcasing traditional farming tools and equipment. 🍌 **KIARA MAE E. PANYO**



## Fields of opportunity

PhilRice Bicol joins the Department of Agriculture-Regional Field Office V (DA-RFO V) and other government agencies in welcoming President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and his delegation during the Presidential Visit and Ceremonial Awarding of Certificates of Land Ownership to Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (ARBs) in Bicol. The event, held on June 7 at the Fuerte Complex in Pili, Camarines Sur, showcased a series of significant government interventions aimed at supporting the region's farmers. 🍌 **AUBREY VISTA P. MANALO**



## PhilRice games on

In celebration of the 39th Founding Anniversary of PhilRice, the Institute launches its sports festival that will run from June 18 to Nov. 6. This event is part of the PhilRice Sports and Fitness Program that aims to help boost the employee's mental health. In the Mr. and Ms. Sportsfest 2024 competition, Ram Joseph A. Venturina and Alexandra C. Tomas were awarded the titles. Meanwhile, Franklin G. Dizon and Tatiana Ysabel B. Sagun secured the 1st runner-up positions. "Let's bring the spirit of sportsmanship to our daily work, fostering collaboration, teamwork, and mutual respect," Dr. John C. de Leon, executive director, said. Sportsfest winners will be awarded in a ceremony on Nov. 6, 2024.

🍌 **AUBREY VISTA P. MANALO**

# Salt-affected ricelands in Sorsogon to plant again

DENISE BIANCA Y. SADULLO

The "Scaling Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) Project for Salt-Affected Rice Environments" Project in Sta. Magdalena was officially launched on May 31, marked by a seed distribution, and the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) by all involved parties.

Following initial coordination in 2023, the project was introduced in Sta. Magdalena to bolster its food security thrusts. Most of the fields in the project area had been fallow for two to five years due to low productivity caused by saltwater intrusion.

The Binhing Palay technology demonstration was established as an initial effort to showcase the performance of saline-resistant rice varieties. The promising results of this demonstration have encouraged local farmers to utilize their fallow land for rice farming again.



(L-R) PhilRice Bicol Branch Director Victoria C. Lapitan, Sta. Magdalena Mayor Mark Jewery G. Lozano, Sorsogon Assistant Provincial Agriculturist Roberto D. Fortes, and Municipal Agriculturist Myra F. Escarda sign the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that will revive the idle lands hit by saltwater intrusion.

With the support of the provincial government of Sorsogon, 40 dedicated farmers are now set to transform 10.72 ha of land using the Package of Technologies (POT) for saline environments. This initiative includes the use of saline-resilient rice variety NSIC Rc 480 to enhance rice production in salt-affected conditions.

Dr. Victoria C. Lapitan, PhilRice Bicol branch director, said that the project not only aims to revitalize agricultural productivity in Sta. Magdalena but also improve the livelihoods of local farmers by capacitating them with the recommended tools and knowledge to make their farms productive again.



## Pest management agents

PhilRice Midsayap's Branch Development Initiative (BDI) project addresses rice production constraints, particularly insect pests, through a collaboration with the DA-Regional Crop Protection Center XII (RCPC XII). Utilizing biocontrol agents like *Metarhizium anisopliae*, the initiative aims to naturally control pest populations, boosting crop yield and farmer income. DA-RCPC XII tested the pest agents' efficacy at BDI demonstration sites for rice and vegetables under the Palayamanan Plus program. PhilRice Midsayap will also promote the adoption of these biocontrol methods among its stakeholders.

CHESHIRE FAYE R PAGARIGAN

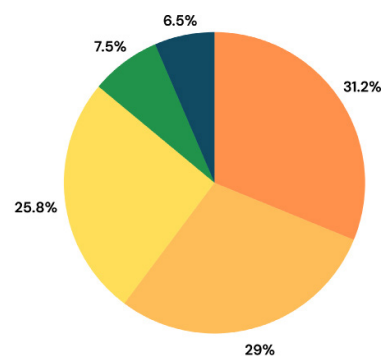
LEARNERS OF DA-PHILRICE CES  
from May-June 2024



**374**  
VISITING LEARNERS  
from 24 groups

**95%** SATISFACTION RATE

## LEARNERS' PROFILE



LGU/Farmers

Students/Faculty

Government Employee

Walk-in

Private Company

Origin:

Region I

Region II

Region III

Region IV-A

NCR

Region VI

## International Visitors



Yale-National University of Singapore  
College, Singapore  
Lone Star College, Texas, USA  
Ministry of Agricultural Forestry  
and Fishery of Japan  
International Rice Research Institute

Infographics by KIARA MAE E. PANYO  
& KATRINA JANELLE T. ALARCON

# RicExhibit showcases rice farming in Bicol Eastern Visayas

DENISE BIANCA Y. SADULLO



Farmer participants at the RicExhibit platform now see the importance of using certified seeds as they receive 5kg of recommended varieties.

**P**hilRice Bicol showcased its rice-farming innovations and services through the Rodeo Festival in Masbate City and in the 2024 Agri-Fiesta 5th Agri-Expo in Camalig, Albay. Through its RicExhibit platform, PhilRice connected with farmers and stakeholders, distributing knowledge products and promoting ICT-based tools such as the Binhing Palay and PalayCheck apps.

In Region VIII, the station participated in the Farmers' and Fisherfolks' Day at the Visayas State University's Centennial Founding Anniversary in Baybay City, Leyte. The DA-Crop Biotechnology Center at PhilRice distributed 5kg certified seeds to local farmers, promoting the use of certified seeds. It also endorsed the benefits of brown rice as a healthier option. These outreach efforts aim to enhance rice-farming practices and engage a wider audience with the institution's advancements. 🍌



## Adapt to save

PhilRice Midsayap-BDI conducts an alternate wetting and drying (AWD) and program briefing among 37 farmer-members of the Midpapan-Balogo Communal Irrigation System (CIS) to promote the use of water saving technology to reduce irrigation water consumption in rice without decreasing yield. Participants were encouraged to adapt the introduced rice technologies to further improve and benefit from the performance of farmers' rice fields. The activity was conducted in Pigcawayan, North Cotabato on May 24.

🍌 CHESHIRE FAYE R PAGARIGAN

## Good farming adopters



Four RiceBIS-assisted farms in Tiaong, Quezon, have become the first in Region IV to earn PhilGAP certification, setting a regional benchmark and opening new market opportunities for other farmers. While 22 farmers from the RiceBIS Negros Agrarian Reform Cooperative (RiceBISNARCo) in Murcia, Negros Occidental, and 70 farmers from Calamba, and Sanghan in Caba-dbaran, Agusan del Norte completed training on Philippine Good Agricultural Practices (PhilGAP). Additionally, 20 farmers from the RiceBIS Batang Farmers Agriculture Cooperative (RBFAC) in Ligao City and the Farmer Field School/ PalayCheck-Palayamanan Farmers Association in Polangui, Albay, also received PhilGAP certification. These initiatives aim to enhance competitiveness and market advantage for farmers. 🍌 CRIS MAE T. NECESITO, AZRYL MAY M. JIMENEZ, GILLIAN MERCADO, GIRLIE A. CARREON

## Boosting operations



Korea Partnership for Innovation of Agriculture (KOPIA) in partnership with PhilRice donates a 2024 Hyundai H100 Shuttle to the Batitang Agriculture Cooperative (BAC), one of PhilRice's RiceBIS communities dedicated to improving the livelihood of rice farmers through innovative agricultural practices. It aims to support and strengthen the business operations of the project on Protective Cultivation of Vegetables in the Philippines, that includes mainly seedling delivery and procurement of farm inputs to enhance an organized rice farmers' organizations productivity and income. The ceremony was held at the BAC's Multipurpose Hall in Zaragoza, Nueva Ecija on June 10.

🍌 AILEN VIENNE C. SEBASTIAN

RICE COMPETITIVENESS ENHANCEMENT FUND  
**TEKNO  
GABAY**  
UPDATES (March-June)

 **2,931**  
Farmers attended  
Male: 1715; Female: 1216

 **27** Municipalities covered

PhilRice experts shared recommendations on rice crop management, including land leveling, crop establishment, pest management, and nutrient management. The sessions engaged diverse farmers, enhancing agricultural practices in their communities.

Infographics by Katrina Janelle T. Alarcon

## Bag of happiness

More than 3,000 farmer-beneficiaries receive inbred-certified seeds from the series of RCEF seed distribution kick-off ceremonies and program briefings for the 2024 wet season. Conducted by PhilRice CES and its seven branches, the activity provided farmers with the opportunity to learn more about RCEF, including its accomplishments and the services offered by the Institute and other partner-implementing agencies. It also served as a platform for farmers to express their concerns, issues, and gratitude toward the program. 🍌

RHEA GRACE Y. MALAPASCUA,  
APRILYN M. PON-AN,  
GIRLIE A. CARREON



## RiceBIS community in Ilocos Norte assisted

FRANZEL MONIQUE D. BONILLA



**T**he Rice Business Innovations System (RiceBIS) community in Batac City, Ilocos Norte received a financial boost in their agro-enterprise endeavors from Senator Bong Go's Malasakit sa Kooperatiba Program, in collaboration with the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA), on May 10 in Rosales, Pangasinan.

The Rayuray Farmers Agriculture Cooperative was among the 22 recipients of PhP50,000 financial grant in Region I, empowering them to boost their agricultural productivity and enhance their economic sustainability.

The members of the cooperative also participated in the orientation on Business Continuity Management, which equipped them with the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate and survive serious disruptions. 🍌



## Carbon footprint mitigation

Dr. Eduardo Jimmy P. Quilang, officer-in-charge of the Office of the Deputy Executive Director for Research and Dr. Jaime A. Manalo IV, head of the Socioeconomics division, join the stakeholder dialogue workshop to evaluate investment opportunities and develop policy options for carbon mitigation in the rice sector for the Methane Accelerator for Southeast Asia (MASEA) project in Bangkok, Thailand on May 20-24. The workshop focused on the multisectoral dialogues by tackling the economic, socio-technical, and institutional aspects of rice carbon mitigation. The cross-country learning is a crucial platform for researchers and policymakers to come up with a bottom-up approach and establish baseline knowledge on the subject. 🍌 KIARA MAE E. PANYO

# Map project holds workshop in Laguna

GILLIAN MERCADO

A participatory climate risk-mapping workshop organized by the Climate-Smart Maps for Strengthening Adaptation Plans of Farming Communities (CS Map) project developed by PhilRice and Central Luzon State University (CLSU) was held on April 30 at the Office of the Provincial Veterinarian in Santa Cruz, Laguna. This is to assist local governments and communities by developing provincial maps on climate risks and crop suitability, and creating climate change adaptation and mitigation plans for rice-growing areas.

The project aims to identify and document climate-related hazards, including typhoons, floods,



Municipal Agriculturist of Sta. Cruz, Benedicta R. Tobias ( R ), evaluates flood damage in her area to document climate-related hazards and their impacts.

droughts, and pests, and assess their impact and frequency. They also created a seasonal hazard calendar and mapped resources such as irrigation, financial support, and agricultural institutions. The workshop concluded with the validation of satellite-based maps highlighting vulnerable rice areas prone to drought and floods. 🍌



## Enhancing spatial skillset

Twenty one selected staffers and personnel from PhilRice Midsayap, Bicol, Isabela, Batac, Negros, and National Irrigation Administration XII participate in the 5-day training on Basic Geographic Information Systems (GIS) in PhilRice Midsayap on May 13-17. Spearheaded by the HEATMin Rice Project of PhilRice Midsayap through the Philippine Rice Information System (PRiSM), this training aimed to develop expertise and gain hands-on experience, understand the fundamentals of GIS, and familiarize its spatial formats with the help of user-friendly interfaces and accessible tools such as QGIS and GPS, thus enabling participants to apply these skills in their respective projects.

🍌 CHESHIRE FAYE R PAGARIGAN



## Retirement of a pioneer

Architect Renato B. Bajit, former chief administrative officer at PhilRice CES, was honored with a farewell program on June 3. He served for 37 years and stands as one of the pioneering pillars of the Institute, contributing invaluable expertise that greatly propelled its operations. His innovative contributions have led to the building of state-of-the-art facilities, beautiful stations and seed farms, a clean and green campus, a motorpool for roadworthy trips. He was a ready-to-help architect to other DA agencies. 🍌 AUBREY VISTA P. MANALO



## GAD enhanced

PhilRice GAD Unit supports National Irrigation Administration (NIA)-Irrigation Management Offices (IMOs) Region III in more effective gender-responsive and inclusive project implementation in agricultural sectors on a 3-day seminar workshop on Gender and Development (GAD) Gender Analysis and Gender Analysis Tools on June 5-7 at the NIA Pantabangan Lake Resort, Pantabangan, Nueva Ecija. This seminar reinforces understanding of gender analysis and equips participants with tools for project implementation and management, monitoring and evaluation (PIMME), and integration of GAD with the use of sex disaggregated data (SDD) for preparing the annual GAD plan, budget, and achievement report. 🍌 GLAIZA D. CARRERA

## Piliin mo ang Pilipinas: Farmers' Tribute launched



To honor Filipino farmers during the 2024 National Farmers' and Fisherfolk's Month (NFFM), PhilRice launched the "Piliin mo ang Pilipinas: Farmers' Tribute" on social media, reaching about 95,000 netizens. This initiative celebrated farmers' vital role in ensuring food security and was showcased during the NFFM's main event in Diliman, Quezon City on May 27. Produced by the Institute's Development Communication Division, the initiative is part of the "Be Riceponsible" campaign, encouraging responsible rice consumption and supporting Filipino local rice farmers. 🍌

**KATRINA JANELLE T. ALARCON**



## Seed support

The National Rice Seed Growers Federation of the Philippines Incorporated (PhilPalay) honors DA-PhilRice and Senator Cynthia Villar, represented by Atty. Rhaegee Tamaña her Chief of Staff, at its 2024 2nd Quarter Assembly. PhilPalay awards the DA-PhilRice through the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) Seed component for its significant contributions to the rice seed industry by providing a systematic guideline for the distribution of certified inbred seeds to farmer-beneficiaries, leading to an increase in inbred rice seed growers and the life progression of rice farmers.

"We offer our heartfelt appreciation to PhilRice for their excellence in service and work ethics. Despite the incessant criticism of our government agencies, PhilRice rekindles our hope in these institutions," PhilPalay Chair Ariel Dolores said.

Dir. U-Nichols Manalo, representative of Agriculture Sec. Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, addressed high input costs and rising farmgate palay prices while SAGIP Partylist Rep. Rodante D. Marcoleta emphasized the vital role of local seed growers in ensuring agricultural productivity and food security during the discussion. The event was attended by over 300 local seed growers on June 19 at the DA-Crop Biotechnology Center. 🍌 **KIARA MAE E. PANYO**



## Taste to attest

PhilRice Los Banos showcases off-station rice technology demonstration of inbred, hybrid, and climate-smart varieties in a Lkabay Play conducted on May 3 in San Juan, Batangas. Featured varieties include Tubigan (NSIC Rc 216, 622, 624, 626, 630); Sahod-Ulan (NSIC Rc 418); Salinas (NSIC Rc 604); and public hybrid (Mestiso 20). Participants preferred NSIC Rc 624 (92%), Rc 622 (63%), and Rc 626 (54%) among the eight varieties introduced.

🍌 **GILLIAN MERCADO**



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**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

## Professional Regulatory Board of Food Technology New Professional Food Technologist



**Evelyn H. Bandonil**

Supervising Science Research Specialist

## 24th Philippine Society of Soil Science and Technology Conference Best Poster Award



(L-R) Filomena S. Grospe,

Jayvee A. Cruz-Kitma, Daisyree G. Agustin,

Jovino L. De Dios, Annie E. Espiritu,

Sandro D. Canet, and Wilfredo B. Collado

Effect of Long-Term Nutrient Management on  
Soil Fertility and Microbial Diversity (2nd Place)

## National Academy of Science and Technology 2024 Outstanding Scientific Paper Award



**Kristine Samoy-Pascual**, Senior Science  
Research Specialist, and Lea S. Caguiat

*Microclimate of Tropical Paddy Rice  
as Influenced by Water Management*

## University of the Philippines Alumni Association (UPAA) 2024 UPAA Distinguished Alumni Award in Community Service for Women Empowerment



**Diadem B. Gonzales-Esmero**

Supervising Science Research Specialist

## Pest Management Council of the Philippines 56th Anniversary and Annual Scientific Conference 2024 Gerardo O. Ocfemia Outstanding Plant Pathologist Award for Research



**Dr. Jennifer T. Niones**

Head, Crop Protection Division

## National Academy for Science and Technology Outstanding Book and/or Monograph Awardee



**Norvie L. Manigbas, Thelma F. Padolina,  
Nenita V. Desamero, Alex T. Rigor,  
Tomas M. Masajo†**

Rice Breeding Operations Manual  
of the Philippine Rice Research Institute

## Gantimpala Agad Awardees



**Physical Plant Division  
Motorpool Technicians  
and Electricians Team, CES**

**CES General Assembly 2.0  
Committee, CES**

## Pasasalamat Awardees



**PhilRice Los Banos Utility Workers**

**Alfhie James G. Galanza, Batac**

**Joshua P. Mendoza, CES**

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

**PhilRice Negros**

## Scientific Career System Newly upgraded Career Scientist III

**Dr. Norvie L. Manigbas**

Chief Science Research Specialist

## Passed the Certified Public Accountant Licensure Examination

**Patricia Jean B. Duldulao, CPA**

Corporate Services Division

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