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grains

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April - June 2013



Special Report: **The Administrator's first 100 days**

Dr. Amelia Tejada:

2013 outstanding Science Administrator Awardee

Dir. Danilo Pastrana:

Savoring the Fruits of Hardwork

The Emerging Southern Frontier

The Hidden Treasures of Quirino

On the cover

This is proving to be a very significant year for the food agency. With massive procurement strategies implemented nationwide, NFA warehouses, especially in procurement centers like this in Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija are overflowing with palay.

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Cover Design: Boy Paraiso

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Ganito kami noon...
Ganito na kami ngayon...

Oops: Our apologies to Atty. Jubal R. Picio
of the Legal Affairs Department for misspell-
ing his name from the previous issue.

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Team Building for Corporate Unity & Growth

Team Building is a corporate social responsibility (CSR) that every company should embrace and sustain. Being a CSR, it makes sense for an organization to pursue team building through a variety of practices, that can range from simple bonding exercises to complex simulations and team building retreats including group assessment and group-dynamic games. By and large, team building enhances self-development, positive communication, leadership skills and group decision-making geared towards organizational development.

Administrator Orlan A. Calayag expressed this principle when he required NFA offices nationwide to include team building in their regular activities. The administrator wanted a deeper meaning of team building that would go beyond team recreation.

To define the deeper meaning, a seminar on team building was conducted where the participants were trained to be part of the pool of team building facilitators. The seminar was highlighted by activities showing methods and techniques that would help discover and enhance the skills and strengths of every employee being a member of an organization, of one family and one community.

The seminar offered valuable lessons: that team building is about knowing oneself and finding out his ultimate best that would create a difference in the growth and success of his team; that team building is about employees who are members of interdependent teams, instead of as individual workers, who value cooperation and teamwork for the noble goal of improved team performance; that it is selecting or creating a team that is empowered by achievements of individual employees; that it is discovering the “we” concept – that truly, no man is an island.

According to Frank LaFasto, an internationally recognized author and lecturer on management issues, there are five dynamics that are fundamental to team success. These are: team **members** who are effective and efficient individuals capable of decision-making; team **relationships** built by members who are able to give and receive feedback; team **problem solving** where the team depends on how focused and clear their goal is, requiring a relaxed, comfortable and accepting environment complemented by open and honest communication; team **leadership** that focuses on the goal, ensures a collaborative climate, builds confidence of team members, sets priorities, demonstrates sufficient “know-how” and manages performance through feedback; **organizational environment** where the climate and culture of the organization must be conducive to team behavior and where competitiveness is discouraged while uniformity is encouraged to eliminate conflict and discord among team members.

The essence of team building is richly defined by famous industrialist Henry Ford who said that “Coming together is the beginning, keeping together is progress, working together is success.” (**cora l. abio**)

Lessons

The first semester has been an unprecedented moment for NFA. For the first time in our 41 years, we achieved unmatched procurement record after meeting targets beyond what we hoped to achieve. This is a heart-stopping, slow motion, “yes!” jump shot kind of moment. Okay, I’m exaggerating a little but it’s still a moment, a reason to celebrate. It’s something we at the NFA should be proud of because each of us contributed to this success.

There’s a psychological explanation to why we remember our firsts. They leave deep-seated marks somewhere in our brain cells. In this issue of Grains, there’s a special feature on the first 100 days of Administrator Orlan A. Calayag. He officially took over as Administrator last January 17. We’ve listed his initial accomplishments in office.

For the first time too, the Philippines is exporting rice to other countries. Agriculture Secretary Proceso Alcala and Administrator Calayag were there to witness the send-off at the port area. Ms. Carolina Bermudez, our correspondent in the National Capital Region recorded this event.

We also have a feature on Quirino province courtesy of Ms. Cynthia Suarez. It’s also worth browsing over an article about Tawi-Tawi in the South. While you’re at it, read Food Development Center’s Dr. Amelia Tejada who brought honor to the NFA after bagging this year’s Science Administrator Award from DOST.

Leaf through the beautiful life story of Ms. Grace Padapat of Quirino and learn her life’s many lessons. Speaking of lessons, except for that bag slashing incident, I enjoy taking the jeepney ride to the office every morn-

ing. I get to meet interesting characters who either leave me amused or laughing the rest of the day. I get a daily dose of stories from ordinary lives which teach me lessons. One day, I learned to be grateful for having a regular day job that provides for my family, unlike the guy next to me who laments about losing his job. Next day, I have to be thankful for being healthy unlike somebody’s loved one who’s been in and out of the hospital for kidney treatment. I learned to laugh about my worries when I hear about somebody’s troubles.

In graduate school, having classmates from different countries with diverse cultures has its advantages. I learned that once you’ve expressed your thoughts, voiced your opinion, you can forget about it and move on. You remain friends afterwards.

Life indeed is full of lessons. Two things will happen. Either we learn from them or we totally forget about them. Take your pick.

Lina^u

Highest palay procurement in 41 years

National Food Authority Administrator Orlan A. Calayag proudly announced that the agency had bought a total of 2,286,624 bags of palay for the month of April alone, which is 212.02 percent more than the month's target of 1,078,500 bags.

"This is the highest procurement record in NFA's 41 years of existence," Calayag said, and he expressed optimism that the trend will continue through the main harvest from October to December.

Through massive campaigns and innovative methods of procurement, the NFA has been exceeding its monthly procurement targets. From January to April, the agency had already bought a total of 4,790,645 bags of palay or 130.90 percent more than its procurement target of 3,659,700 bags for the period.

Calayag attributes the NFA's creditable palay buying performance to the professionalism, unwavering dedication and high morale of NFA employees to achieve, and even surpass, set targets. "Each NFA employee will always rise up to the occasion in the name of public service," Calayag said.



Among the top rice producers are: Region 4 (Southern Tagalog), where NFA bought a total of 1,195,530 bags from January to April, which is 137 percent more than the target volume of 872,000 bags; Region 3 (Central Luzon), with 1,101,975 bags or 225 percent over the 489,000 bags target; Region 2 (Cagayan Valley, with 888,975 bags, 157 per-

cent more than the targeted volume of 567,500 bags; Region 11 (Southern Mindanao), with 241,139 bags or 127 percent over the 190,000 bags target; and Region 12 (Central Mindanao), with 186,920 bags or 179 percent more than the target volume of 108,000 bags.

But even in non-traditional rice-producing regions, the NFA has been procuring unprecedented volumes. For example, in Region 8 (Eastern Visayas), the NFA had bought 119,296 bags, which is 497 percent of its target of only 24,000

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CES officers attend conference

The Career Executive Service Board (CESB) and the National Union of Career Executive Officers, Inc. (NUCESO) held its 39th anniversary and 2012 annual CES conference in Zamboanga City last November 14-16, 2012.

The annual activity is an opportunity to renew ties and friendship, share new managerial learning and rekindle the inspiration to continue the tradition of excellence, competence and service. Major highlights of the conference are leadership and wellness workshops that gave the

members a higher sense of mastery and social responsibility.

The theme of the anniversary "Going 4G! Good to Great, Green Governance" describes the country's significant economic growth. The CES believes that the country will soon be joining the world's tiger economies with the excellent service from faithful civil servants who ensure good governance in the whole bureaucracy. It is a milestone event that brings enormous impact on the quest for professionalization and raises civil service to a different level.

The NFA delegation is composed of Assistant Administrator Jose D. Cordeiro, Directors Joseph Y. dela Cruz, Ruben J. Reside, Vilma V. Zarraga, Ruben S. Rimando, Amadeo B. de Guzman, Carlito G. Co, Rolando M. Maravilla, Danilo L. Bonabon, Edgar S. Bentulan, Gil Pepito B. Pacqueo, Rex C. Estoperez, Omar K. Kamid and Assistant Regional Director Elvira M. Martinez.



NFA-CES officers with other CES officers from other agencies.



Food officials grace 1st SP Session

Manager Rolando S. Rufo and Assistant Provincial Manager Ligaya M. Apolinario of NFA-Western Pangasinan and NFA-Eastern Pangasinan, respectively, attended the 1st Regular Session of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan (SP) this province held at the Session Hall, Capitol Building, Lingayen last July 8, 2013. This is per invitation of the Secretary to the Sanggunian, Atty. Verna T. Nava-Perez to shed light on the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) on Rice Loan to be entered into by the Provincial Government with the agency.

Upon request of SP Member Alfonso C. Bince, Jr., Manager Rufo stood on the podium to apprise the body on the terms and conditions of the MOA. He also emphasized that the province has sufficient stocks of rice to meet the needs of the province and is ready to respond when calamity occurs. In response to the query of the former as to how many bags of rice were availed of by the province in 2012, the Manager informed the body that the Provincial Government was able to benefit

830 bags during the period June to September, 2012. He added that the rice loan is payable within six months.

There were many inquiries from the Provincial Board that were answered positively by Manager Rufo and Asst. Provincial Manager Apolinario. In particular, they both assured that the province has enough rice and that at present, the two NFA branches have stepped up their milling operations to augment food security rice reserves.

On motion of SP Member Danilo C. Uy, there being no objection, the body approved the Provincial Resolution No. 291-2013, authorizing the Provincial Governor, Amado T. Espino, Jr. to enter into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the NFA Pangasinan Branches, on Rice Loan for relief operations whenever State of Calamity is declared and for stock piling in preparation for eventualities or emergencies that may occur at any given time. **(CHONA DG. MARAMBA, correspondent)**

Stock Accountable Officers given Orientation

To enable employees holding sensitive positions/functions to stay focused on good warehouse keeping and on their stock accountabilities as well as integrating moral commitment to the vision/mission of the agency was the rationale behind the Orientation/Re-Orientation Seminar for Stock Accountable Officers and prospective Warehouse Supervisors of NFA Region I on June 20-21, 2013 at NFA Staff House and Training Center in Baguio City. Speakers from the Regional Office, COA and guest lecturers took time in instilling the importance of a sound warehouse keeping to the participants. RD Piolito C. Santos led the speakers from the Regional Office where he gave emphasis on the agency's vision, mission and mandates. The Regional Director also discussed food security as well as some topics on the programs and operations of the agency.

On hand to support the Regional Director were: RAO Prudencia B. Roberonta who presented the guidelines in the selection of Warehouse Supervisors/Acting Warehouse Supervisors and Team Leaders; ROO Erlinda E. Balderas who gave an overview on the Existing Guidelines on Warehouse Stocks and MTS Documentation and Reporting System and Warehouse Transactions; RACCT Lolita O. Sanedrin who presented the Computerized Stock Examination and Tolerable Allow-



MEETING WITH RISO/PISO. Director Judy Carol L. Dansal of Institutional Services Department stresses a point during a meeting with RISOs/PISOs of the region held on April 10-11, 2013 at Pangil Beach Resort, Currimao, Ilocos Norte. **(FREDERICK B. DULAY, correspondent)**

ance (TOLA) and Computation of Stock Accountabilities; RSQAO Engr. Eleonor A. Andres who spoke on Current Good Manufacturing Practices (cGMP) and Other Related Concerns; RSEIO Manuel C. Calaowa who presented the Guidelines on the Filing of Criminal and Administrative Cases Against NFA Accountable Officers with Final Shortages. ROO Balderas and RSQAO Andres also talked on Quality and Inventory Management.

Commission on Audit (COA) State Auditor IV Remedios G. Movida presented "ARaL" of Stock Accountable Officers while Asst. Regional Director Ma. Elvira M. Martinez handled other issues

and concerns on Warehouse Related Operations and Maintenance. Also present as guest lecturer was Internal Auditor Pio Villaces from NFA Central Office.

Around 40 participants coming from the Regional Office and the seven Provincial Offices in the Region participated in the training which was a timely undertaking not only for those already fielded as Warehouse Supervisors but also to employees who have the potential to become Warehouse Supervisors/Team Leaders for them to acquire knowledge or be re-oriented on proper storage/warehousing principles and procedures. **(FREDERICK B. DULAY, correspondent)**

2012 procurement accomplishment highest in 5 years

NFA Region 1 bought a total of 1.329 million bags of palay in 2012 which is 219.75 percent higher than what the region accomplished in 2011.

Dir. Piolito C. Santos said that the volume of palay procured was the highest that the region has recorded since 2008 when NFA Ilocos Region bought around 1.8 million bags of palay from farmers. He added, however, that the accomplishment was only 84.77 percent of the region's target for 2012 which is 1,568,000 bags.

"While we recorded a record number in our procurement accomplishment, still we fell short of our target. But with our continued massive procurement program, we hope to corner a good number of palay from our farmers and farmer cooperatives in 2013 and hopefully we could exceed our 2012 accomplishment and boost our stock inventory," said Santos.

Santos attributed the high palay procurement accomplishment in 2012 to lower ex-farm price per kilogram, relatively

better harvest in 2012, non-occurrence of strong typhoons and tropical depressions, fielding of mobile procurement teams and the intensive conduct of Ugnayan activities in the provinces which opened communication networks between the agency and the farmers. He also credited the hardwork and dedication of the field personnel in luring the farmers to sell their palay to the NFA.

"We have exhibited an aggressive stance in our procurement wherein we made sure that delivery of palay to NFA warehouses and buying stations were made easy and farmer-friendly. This is aside from our "hassle-free" requirements for accreditation of new individual farmers/FOs and renewal of farmers/master's passbook. The fielding of mobile procurement teams also helped in reaching far-flung areas and easing the farmers' burden of transporting their palay," Santos said.

Expectedly, the highest palay procurements were recorded during the

months of October to December, the main cropping season in the country, where the targets for October and November were even exceeded. Santos revealed that in October 2012, the region procured 548,792 bags or 171.50 percent of the target for the said month and in November, it exceeded its target by 123.04 percent to procure 538,915 bags.

The NFA buys clean and dry palay from farmers and farmer cooperatives at a government support price of P17.00 per kilogram. Incentives are also given to individual farmers which include a graduated delivery fee of P0.20 to P0.50 per kilogram depending on the distance of delivery by the farmer and another P0.20 for drying fee. For farmer cooperatives, the incentives include the same amount for delivery and drying fee given to individual farmers but with an additional P0.30 as cooperative development incentive fee (CDIF).

For the last quarter of 2012, the NFA opened 19 buying stations in the region aside from the mobile procurement teams. **(FREDERICK B. DULAY, correspondent)**



IMEE FOR FARMERS. *Ilocos Norte Governor Imee R. Marcos signs the Memorandum of Agreement between the Provincial Government of Ilocos Norte and the NFA under the CMAPIPULGU program locally dubbed as "Marketing Assistance Na Alay Ni Governor Imee sa Magsasaka (MANANG)" on April 18, 2013 at the Ilocos Norte Provincial Capitol. This project is in collaboration with the Provincial Government giving a premium price of P0.70/kg on top of the buying price of 12.30/kg, hence, NFA will buy yellow corn (YGN) from farmers in Ilocos Norte at a price of P13/kg. (DIANA MARIE G. AGUSTIN, correspondent)*



TURNOVER RITES. *NFA Ilocos Norte employees, headed by Provincial Manager Beverlyn P. Peralta in a souvenir photo during the turnover of stewardship of Director Piolito C. Santos (outgoing) and Director Carlito G. Co (incoming) held in San Juan, La Union Regional Office on July 10, 2013. (DIANA MARIE G. AGUSTIN, correspondent)*

A busy start for Ilocos Sur

2013 indeed is a busy year for NFA Ilocos Sur.

For the first quarter of 2013, the branch was able to procure 102,012 bags representing 340.04% of the 30,000 target for the quarter. This accomplishment revealed that individual farmers and farmer organizations patronize NFA procurement programs and preferred to sell to the agency despite higher prices offered by private traders. This also showed that they are satisfied with the services and incentives the agency offers. The branch, despite the full capacity status of its warehouses, exhausted all remedies to accommodate palay deliveries from farmers. Deliveries from farmer organizations for 2012 have accumulated a total of Php 2,888,074.51 Cooperative Development Incentive Fee (CDIF) due for withdrawal this year.

Region 2

It is noteworthy to mention that procurement of the branch for 2012 was 261,763 bags or 127.69% of the 205,000 target for the year. The volume augmented the 1.3 million bags of palay procured by Region I which made the region 2nd in rank in the entire nation and placed NFA-Ilocos Sur No.1 in accomplishment for the whole Region I.

Aside from procurement, milling was undertaken by the branch for the 2012 and 2013 PD1 palay. Test-milling for 2013 started on the month of February to ensure enough buffer stocks for the province and nearby regions including calamity stricken areas like Davao City.

During milling proper, PM Bulao encouraged miller-contractors to adopt his conceptualized innovation firstly implemented by Milcont Ernesto Torres to yield higher milling recovery.

The Technology includes the infusion of conditioned air to the ricemill polisher to reduce temperature during polishing process which will reduce breakage leading to increased milling yield.

Based on the Testing and Evaluation conducted by Dr. Mary Anne Baradi of Philrice, Batac City, the Innovative Concept of Engr. Fortunato B. Bulao could increase the milling recovery by 1.35% when conditioned air is applied. Likewise, based on the laboratory analyses conducted by NFA Regional Office, the headrice recovery exceeded the standard 65:35% ratio ranging from 67:33% to 72:28%. At present 11 miller contractors in the province are enjoying the innovative technology of Mgr. Bulao.

NFA-Ilocos Sur could not perform such accomplishments without the cooperation of stakeholders including media. Ugnayan meetings have been conducted to keep them abreast of the latest plans and programs of the agency. **(ELIZABETH T. KAI, correspondent)**



Deputy Administrator Pedro S. Hernando, Jr., addressing NFA employees in Region II during his visit to the province. **(ANGELICA S. SIMEON, correspondent)**

Region 3

Nueva Ecija remains the country's rice granary

Nueva Ecija is known far and wide as the rice granary of the Philippines owing largely to its vast arable lands and even rainfalls the whole year round and for consistently coming out with remarkable palay production through the years. Proof of this achievement was the very impressive palay volume that the province was able to procure on the first quarter harvest this year where storage in the NFA compound in Cabanatuan City was utilized for the purpose. Although Nueva Ecija has lately been experiencing calamity related problems, perhaps

the effect of the global warming, the toll on palay production was significantly minimal to adversely affect the economic well-being of the province.

The good news is that Region 3's exceptional feat in the last procurement season caught the attention of Administrator Orlan A. Calayag that he lost no time in expressing his appreciation to all stakeholders especially farmers. All NFA Region 3 employees share this honor, with the able support of Director Amadeo B. de Guzman and Manager George R. Roca. The media also deserve special mention because through their pen, NFA's achievements,

programs and advocacies particularly the Food Staples Sufficiency Program has been elevated into national awareness.

The Regional Office is now in the midst of preparations for the incoming main procurement season, and the encouragement and assistance from the government and NFA top management plus the level of support from the farmers and rice businessmen will all help in reaching the agency's targets in the next procurement endeavor. **(JOSEPHINE C. BACUNGAN, correspondent)**



The staff of the Corporate Planning & Management Services Department (CPMSD) headed by Department Manager Ma. Mercedes G. Yacapin dropped by the NFA-Bataan Farm Level Grains Centers (FLGC) in Dinalupihan as part of their educational trip to Bataan and Zambales last April 19.

They were welcomed by Provincial Manager Adelaida C. Nuestro, POO Maribeth M. Magcaling, Acting WS II Estelita Lacaron and other NFA-Bataan personnel.

The group witnessed actual procurement operation. PM Nuestro gave a brief background on the construction of the FLGC, stating that it is one of the first FLGCs constructed with the help of the Municipal Government of Dinalupihan that donated the land in 1994.

POO Magcaling discussed the procurement process and answered questions raised by the visitors.

Ms. Marlene Bilog, secretary of Makabagong Agrikultura ng Dinalupihan Marketing Cooperative (MAD) was present

to explain the reasons for their preference to sell palay to NFA. Some of these are: trust in the agency's weighing scales; the benefits of Cooperative Development Incentive Fee (CDIF); the friendly attitude of the warehouse staff who are easy to transact business with, and the farmer-friendly payment scheme.

After the brief discussions, the CPMSD personnel left to continue their trip to the province of Zambales, with invaluable insights gained from their brief but meaningful visit. (COCO P. REYES, correspondent)

Region 4 i-Rice Feeding program for elementary pupils

Aimed at fighting malnourishment among children as a step towards nation building and maximizing pupils' potentials for a better future, NFA Quezon provincial office conduct i-Rice feeding program in elementary schools.

Recently, the branch adopted Isabang Elementary School in Brgy. Isabang, Lucena City, with 120 pupil-beneficiaries of the i-Rice Feeding Program.

i-Rice feeding in the said school gained positive results during the three month-period of feeding Iron Fortified Rice wherein the children became lively and fast reacting in the final feeding held last March 3.

The i-Rice feeding program was also held at Tanauan Elementary School in Plaridel, Quezon last February 27, 2013 and graced by DA Secretary Proceso J. Alcala, 4th District Representative Lorenzo Tañada III and NFA Regional Director Tomas R. Escarez.

Everybody, particularly the distin-



Feeding program in Tanauan Elementary School, Plaridel, Quezon with DA Secretary Procy Alcala, Congressman Lorenzo Tañada III and Regional Director Tomas R. Escarez together with NFA Quezon Provincial Manager Nestor C. Balina and NFA Marinduque Provincial Manager Lewi Tolentino. (MARIANITA C. ZAFORTEZA, correspondent)

guished guests were given a pleasant surprise when a grade four pupil recited the "Panatang Makapalay" by heart. Sec. Alcala, Cong. Tañada and RD Escarez clapped their hands in amusement.

i-Rice feeding program was highlighted during the kick-off ceremony of the National Year of Rice in Quezon Province. (MARIANITA C. ZAFORTEZA, correspondent)



PALAY PROCUREMENT. NFA Laguna Provincial Manager Gondelina U. Alda witnessing actual palay-buying by the Laguna Procurement Team in Bgy. Cambuja, Sta. Maria, Laguna. (ANNABELL P. ONCINIAN, correspondent)



GRAND UGNAYAN. NFA Regional Director Tomas R. Escarez answers queries from farmers during the "Grand Ugnayan" Open Forum as speakers from PFAC, DAR, NIA, and OPA await for questions from the audience. (ANNABELL P. ONCINIAN, correspondent)



IRRIGATORS' MEETING. NFA Laguna Provincial Manager Gondelina U. Alda, Information Officer Annabell P. Oncinian, PSQAO Malvarosa C. Bundalian pose with the Irrigators/Farmers Association presidents from Laguna and Rizal after a very productive meeting held at the National Irrigation Administration office (NIA) in Pila, Laguna last March 18. (ANNABELL P. ONCINIAN, correspondent)

"Teknokliniks" Caravan for food self-sufficiency

NFA Quezon participated in a two-month caravan covering February and March spearheaded by the Department of Agriculture titled Quezon Farmers Forum dubbed as "Teknokliniks" in support of the Food Staples Self Sufficiency Program.

In line with the celebration of the National Year of Rice 2013, the DA Regional Engagement Team headed by Mr. Benjie Oliva conducted the "Teknokliniks" in different municipalities in Quezon Province to accelerate farmers' productivity through mechanization and other government support services focusing on the upliftment of farmers.

NFA Quezon Provincial Manager Nestor C. Balina expressed his full support when he personally attended the Farmers Forum (Teknokliniks) in Sampaloc and Mauban. He discussed the agency's aspiration to uplift the lives of farmers through the various programs of NFA and by organizing themselves into organizations or cooperatives that will transact with the agency in selling their palay, thus they are not only participating in government programs but doing an act of nationalism as well.

Manager Balina answered queries from the farmers on whether the NFA can lend them money to support their production expenses. He clarified that NFA is not a financial institution so it can't lend money for that purpose; but said transacting with the agency will open gates to farmer organizations towards financial credibility and borrowing from government banks such as LandBank.

Succeeding forums in the different municipalities were attended by PIO Marianita C. Zaporteza informing the farmers on NFA's Enhanced Palay Procurement Strategies which include simplified requirements for issuance of individual farmers / masters' passbook, accepting palay deliveries from walk in farmers, etc.

The "Teknokliniks" started on February 6 and ended March 13, 2013. (MARIANITA C. ZAPORTEZA, correspondent)



A farmer in Lucban, Quezon reading procurement leaflets distributed by NFA Quezon. (MARIANITA C. ZAPORTEZA, correspondent)



WAREHOUSE INSPECTION. Field inspection of Calapan, Oriental Mindoro by Provincial Manager Oscar Servando (second from right), APM Roger Lumpas (extreme left) at CALFFAMCO buying station under Procurement Team Leader Edith M. Lebumfacil. (CHEL P. INFANTADO, correspondent)

NFA Reg. IV Director Tomas R. Escarez (middle) poses with some farmers and members of farmer cooperatives/associations and speakers. From left: Provincial Farmers Action Council Chairman Benjamin Villanueva (far left); Provincial Agriculture Office OIC Juanito T. Samson; NFA Provincial Manager Gondelina U. Alda; and Provincial Agrarian Reform Officer I Glen Quidayan during the grand “ugnayan” held on May 8, 2013 at the Cultural Center in Sta. Cruz, Laguna where Gov. E.R. Ejercito Estrada expressed his full support to the government’s Food Staples Sufficiency Program (FSSP) and the NFA Grand Ugnayan. The “ugnayan” was initiated by NFA San Pablo led by Manager Alda and attended by collaborating agencies like the DA/OPA, NIA, DAR, PIA, PIO and some 500 farmers, farmer associations/cooperatives from Laguna. It was an effective tool for reaching out to the agricultural workers especially palay farmers and informing them of the palay procurement program of the NFA as part of its food security mandate and the FSSP of the Department of Agriculture. NFA Laguna had been conducting ugnayans or meetings at different barangays of palay-producing areas since March 2013.

Region 5

‘Ugnayan’ generates awareness and support from farmers

The conduct of regionwide ‘Ugnayan’ with farmers, local government units (LGUs), Municipal Agricultural Officers (MAOs) and other agencies has borne fruit and has created the desired awareness amongst stakeholders about NFA’s palay procurement program and the benefits derived from it, such as the modified and simplified requirements in securing farmer’s passbook, upgraded delivery incentive fee, prompt cash payment scheme, and revised quality specifications in order to minimize rejects as it was the complaints of farmers before.

In line with the marching orders

of newly installed NFA Administrator Orlan A. Calayag to conduct massive palay procurement from farmers, the executives of Region V headed by RM Alan B. Borja, have doubled their efforts to boost NFA’s palay buying activities in the region. This is in support of the Department of Agriculture’s Food Staples Sufficiency Program aimed at attaining rice self-sufficiency.

As of April 30, 2013, the provincial offices of Camarines Norte, Catanduanes and Albay have already surpassed their target by 144.87%, 7.63% and 3.42%, respectively, while other provinces have yet to attain their target for the summer

cropping season which “officially” ends in June.

With palay deliveries still picking-up in other areas, the NFA is leaving no stones unturned by fielding more of its personnel as Classifiers and Special Disbursing Officers (SDOs), as well as proper positioning of logistics aimed at enhancing the volume deliveries of farmers with speed and efficiency.

Following the trend in the palay purchases by each province, “we are confident that we will attain the regional target by the end of June or even surpass it in the overall,” RM Borja said. (NELSIE E. AL-CANTARA, correspondent)



ARD Ibarra briefs Administrator Calayag about the Sigma Warehouse.

Calayag visits warehouse in Capiz

The Sigma Warehouse was hailed as the most beautiful warehouse in Capiz last April 12, 2013 when Administrator Orlan A. Calayag came for a visit when he attended this year's **Capiz-tahan** wherein the highlight was the Farmers' Day.

Having assumed office barely three months before the visit, Calayag also took the chance to meet and greet fellow workers at NFA-Capiz led by OIC Erna Y. Abello.

The Administrator, together with Atty. Dennis Arpia, his special executive assistant, toured the Sigma Warehouse with Regional Director Engr. Javier P. Lozada and Acting Assistant Regional Director Engr. Gil B. Ibarra and all the provincial managers and officers-in-charge of NFA-Region VI.

Since its construction in 1972, it was the first time that this smallest NFA-owned warehouse in Capiz with a floor area of 1,200 square meters was given time to be

seen by an administrator. Said warehouse is located in Barangay Mangoso, Sigma, Capiz about one kilometer away from the national road and is almost an hour trip from NFA-Capiz, Bolo, Roxas City.

Director Lozada and Acting Assistant Director Ibarra briefed the Administrator on the postharvest facilities available at Sigma Warehouse like the biomass-fed dryer and many other innovations of some personnel there. Calayag even took time to look at the situation inside the warehouse which was last year's national finalist in Best Managed Warehouse supervised by Mr. Jesus N. Villaruz.

Administrator Calayag looked happy with his tour as he emphasized that a clean and orderly surrounding is essential to NFA operations. After all, the agency is founded on food security for the Filipino people. (**ROSE B. ANDALECIO**, *correspondent*)

Ready for the rainy days – Trabajo

The National Food Authority in Negros Occidental has enough supply of rice for the rainy season.

This was emphasized by Manager Procopio Trabajo III explaining that aside from the rice they procured from Negrense farmers, they also have grains from Iloilo, Capiz, Aklan, and Antique since the supply from the farmers in the province is negligible in volume.

He said that they are also receiving additional 1,000 sacks of rice from Vietnam.

Trabajo said they usually boost their supply during the third quarter of the year because it is not only the start of the rainy season but also the beginning of the lean months when prices of commercial rice go up.

Meanwhile, NFA held a farmers' forum called "Ugnayan" in Bgy. Cabacungan in La Castellana town attended by about 100 farmers from the said barangay and nearby barangays of Masulog, Mangahanoy and Buraguac, Trabajo said.

"Ugnayan" is a project where

Capiz ready for lean months

NFA-Capiz assures Capizeños of sufficient rice supply for the lean months based on 5,500 bags daily rice requirement of the province.

While waiting for the main harvest season and household stocks are beginning to deplete due to consumption since the last harvest, NFA-Capiz is still able to maintain sufficient buffer stock for distribution and disaster preparedness.

Fifty seven percent of the agency's rice inventory in the province is stored at Dumalag Warehouse in Bgy. Sta. Cruz, Dumalag; 22% is at Sigma Warehouse in Bgy. Mangoso, Sigma and 21% is at Bolo Warehouse in Bgy. Bolo, Roxas City.

Likewise, NFA-Capiz is ready to serve Capizeños' rice needs most especially during calamities anywhere in the province. The Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between NFA and the local government units (LGUs) is the instrument that provides assistance to constituents of a province, city or municipality during disasters or calamities.

According to the situationer report as of June 13, 2013, the province of Capiz holds a total of 300,400 bags to last for 55 days inclusive of inventories from commercial grains businessmen and household.

NFA Administrator Orlan Calayag is thanking all stakeholders especially farmers and media for their untiring support to the food agency's advocacies and programs.

NFA's buying price for palay of almost P18/kg and selling price for rice that ranges from P23 to P25/kg is very beneficial to farmer-consumers.

The more bags of palay we sell to NFA during harvest means the more affordable the price of rice in the market would be during the lean months. (**ROSE B. ANDALECIO**, *correspondent*)

NFA personnel present the agency's programs to farmers and the advantages they will get if they sell their produce to the agency.

NFA buys palay at P17 per kilogram and is also giving a 20-centavo drying incentive and a delivery incentive that ranges from 20 to 50 centavos for every kilogram of palay sold by farmers. (**CYNTHIA LUZ F. CHUA**, *correspondent*)



NFA Antique Provincial Manager Hedy G. Jardeleza discusses NFA palay procurement program to officers of various farmer organizations in the province of Antique. Together with Mgr. Jardeleza are representatives from the office of the Provincial Agriculture Office (PAO), Department of Agrarian reform (DAR) and Provincial farmers Action Council (PFAC). (ELIZABETH T. SALAZAR, correspondent)

In support to the administration's goal of achieving food self-sufficiency, the National Food Authority intensified its palay procurement operations in the province of Antique.

To ease the fear of tightening rice supply and to have enough buffer stock for the country, the food agency endeavored to procure 175,000 bags of palay in the province in 2012 and was able to reach a high of 106.08% accomplishment or 185,643 bags. The trend went on until the early months of 2013 when NFA Antique was able to buy a total of 47,532 bags of palay or 190.13% of its procurement target of 25,000 bags for the first semester of 2013.

NFA Antique Provincial Manager Hedy G. Jardeleza said that the palay procurement target was achieved through the combined efforts of the NFA team and active participation of the farmer organizations in the province which the agency was able to reach through strong linkages with the Department of Agriculture and its attached agencies. Through the National Irrigation Administration, the NFA was able to link up with the "Kaligunan ng Mga Irrigadores kang Antique" (KIA) or the Federation of Irrigators Associations in the province, the Agrarian Reform Communities through DAR, and with the farmer-leaders of the municipalities through active participation in DA's advocacy activities and its Provincial Agricultural & Fishery Council meetings.

Palay procurement from the accredited farmer organizations constituted 50% of the total quantity procured. The

agency's efforts to promote productivity and profitability of the local farmers was translated into action by closely working with them. They continued to sell to NFA even when ex-farm price was relatively close or at par with the NFA buying price.

The agency's pro-active stance for the lean months helped increase the country's rice reserve to meet an increasing demand during the harvest gap and in times of calamities.

While the Department of Agriculture is trying to increase rice pro-

duction through better technology and enhancing irrigation facilities, the NFA is finding ways to reduce if not totally eliminate waste of food/spoilage from farm to the dining table through implementation of the Food Conservation Program.

The true object of the war against poverty and food security is to be at peace especially during calamities and this can only be achieved when the agency would have done what it should do during abundant times. (ELIZABETH T. SALAZAR, correspondent)

Region 7

Cebu participates in NYR launching

In support of the 2013 National Year of Rice (NYR) celebration pursuant to Presidential Proclamation 494, NFA Cebu participated in the launching of the program held last April 30 at the Provincial Capitol Session Hall. The event was spearheaded by the Department of Agriculture (DA) Cebu Field Office. Other DA line agencies and representatives from the Local Government Units (LGUs) were invited to the event. The NFA was represented by Cebu Provincial Manager Nestor Rey Alcosoba, Regional Information Officer Lucy Rosales and Provincial Licensing Officer Beth Quirante.

Cebu Provincial Governor Agnes Magpale was the guest speaker. She lauded the Aquino administration for its serious efforts to promote rice conservation and proper nutrition and the government's bid

to achieve higher yield to attain rice self-sufficiency. She shared the belief that many Filipinos are part of the problem on rice wastage and that they must also be part of the solution by enjoining everyone to promote responsible rice consumption. She said that the campaign for rice conservation should go beyond the 2013 celebration. "It must be an ongoing advocacy of the government through the DA as well as its line agencies," Gov. Magpale said.

After her speech, Gov. Magpale led the participants in the recitation of "Panatang Makapalay".

The ceremonial unveiling of the 2013 NYR tarpaulin followed the program. The guests and attendees were asked to sign on the tarpaulin replica as their commitment of support to the program. (LUCY ROSALES, correspondent)

Bohol bags outstanding performance on ARTA compliance

NFA Bohol scored a rating of 92.08 equivalent to a descriptive rating of Outstanding in the survey conducted by the Civil Service Commission (CSC) recently. In compliance with ARTA (Anti-Red Tape Act) provisions, NFA Bohol secured a 100% satisfaction rate with regard to existence of anti-fixer campaign poster, wearing of ID/nameplates, implementation of no hidden costs, installation of a

Public Assistance and Complaints Desk (PACD) and adherence to the "No Lunch Break" policy. On overall client satisfaction, NFA Bohol obtained a high passing rating on the areas of frontline service provider, service quality, physical set-up/layout and client's satisfaction. It was noted, however, that there was an absence of a special lane, giving priority to pregnant women, elderly and differently-abled persons.

Ms. Liezl B. del Rosario, senior personnel specialist from CSC conducted a Report Card Survey from April 17-19, 2013. The objective of the survey was to obtain feedback on how agencies follow provisions in their respective Citizen's

Charter, obtain information/estimates of hidden costs incurred by clients in accessing frontline service, and rate agency performance and client satisfaction in relation to frontline service delivery. The survey was conducted by interviewing 30 clients immediately after they availed of the frontline services

The awarding of the Report Card Survey was led by Atty. Gina Abellana-Crucio, Director II, together with Ms. del Rosario, at the NFA Manager's Office last June 14. Manager Evasco thanked the employees for the exemplary work performance and quality service they have extended in order to maintain and strengthen good working relationship among the employees and stakeholders. (JHOEL J. LIM, *correspondent*)

Negros Oriental assures stable supply of NFA rice for the lean months

The National Food Authority in Negros Oriental assured the public of sufficient supply of NFA rice for the lean months.

Based on records as of June 07, 2013 NFA Negros Oriental had total rice equivalent of 96,716 bags stored in its three warehouses, namely, GID 1 Warehouse at Pulantubig, Dumaguete City, SIOM Leased Warehouse at Looc, Dumaguete City and GID 2 Warehouse at Guihulngan, Negros Oriental.

The said inventory was good to last for 15 days based on the province' daily rice requirement of 6,600 bags. NFA's average daily sales reached to 494 bags and based on the average daily sales, the agency's total rice inventory will last in 196 days. This means to say that NFA is ready to respond to all needs in all calamity areas.

The sufficient supply of rice can be attributed to the massive procurement of palay produced by the local farmers and the shipment of NFA rice from Cebu City. Another shipment of rice is programmed for Negros Oriental next month.

Intensive palay procurement is on-going. With this, NFA Administrator Orlan Agbin Calayag expressed his appreciation to NFA stakeholders especially the farmers and media for their continuous support in all its advocacy and rice campaign programs. (EMILY L. DIPUTADO, *correspondent*)

MARKET INSPECTION. Mr. Edgar Diez, Investigation Services & Security Officer (ISSO) of NFA Region 7 conducts inspection in major public markets in Cebu City to ensure that NFA rice is visible and sold at a government mandated price at the height of the recent report regarding increase in prices of commercial rice. The NFA Enforcement Section also monitors various establishments/outlets that are selling rice to ensure that they have secured proper grains business licenses from NFA. (LUCY ROSALES, *correspondent*)



ARD Rolly Maravilla being interviewed by Mark Anthony Bautista of GMA-7 Cebu. Maravilla explained that imported rice from Vietnam is part of the region's buffer stocks. (LUCY ROSALES, *correspondent*)



Intensified palay procurement

In adherence to the national government's bid to minimize importation and achieve rice self-sufficiency starting 2013 and onwards, the National Food Authority (NFA) has intensified its palay procurement from local farmers to meet its rice requirements for buffer stocking. NFA Bohol, on its part, initiated various strategies to convince local farmers to sell their produce to the agency. NFA's palay support price is P17.00/kg plus additional incentives like drying fee, delivery fee, and Cooperative Development Incentive Fee (CDIF) for farmer coops. From January to May 2013, NFA Bohol procured 4,687 bags of palay at an estimated cost of P3.28M. This has been a significant achievement since NFA Bohol had no procurement for the past 5 years because of high palay ex-farm prices.

Provincial Manager Maria Fe H. Evasco attributes NFA Bohol's success to the intensified farmer's "ugnayan", a procurement initiative activity, which was done in the three congressional districts of the province. The "ugnayan" aims to promote awareness among local farmers of NFA's mandate on buffer stocking and market price stabilization, hence, the need to procure. Other topics discussed include advocacy on the acceptability and consumption



NFA Provincial Manager Maria Fe H. Evasco together with Regional Director Atty. Efren J. Sabong during a warehouse inspection in Carmen & Ubay, Bohol. (JHOEL J. LIM, correspondent)

of i-Rice (Iron Fortified Rice) and NYR 2013 advocacy which aims to create public awareness on responsible rice consumption to avoid wastage. Other strategies include mobile procurement wherein NFA-owned trucks are deployed to ease farmer's burden in delivering their minimal stocks to NFA warehouses. The NFA management has also simplified all requirements for securing a farmer's passbook.

Administrator Orlan A. Calayag

assured the public that the agency has sufficient stocks nationwide during the lean season and is also ready to respond to the needs and rice requirements of all calamity areas in times of disasters. The administrator conveyed his appreciation to the stakeholders especially the farmers and media for their continuous support to all NFA's advocacy and rice campaigns which is an indicator of the stakeholders' renewed trust and confidence to the agency. (JHOEL J. LIM, correspondent)

Neg-Or actively procures palay for CY 2013

From Barangay Trinidad, 32 kilometers away from NFA's GID II Warehouse in Negros Oriental, a group of farmers headed by Mr. Roberto Bustamante, delivered 26 bags of palay last January 22, 2013 and 25 bags last January 28, 2013 to get the best price for their produce.

The first and second batches of palay deliveries were received headed by Warehouse Supervisor Luwallhati S. Campoy in Guihulngan, Negros Oriental.

The procured palay were classified by the Provincial Standard Quality Assurance Officer (PSQAO) Ms. Maria Odessa G. Mercado as PD3 (palay dried) for the first batch of 26 bags palay with a net weight of 924.88 kgs. It had 13.2% Moisture Content and 95% Purity. The other batch of 25 bags (Palay Dried) PD1 with a net kilogram of 991.00 had a 13.5% Moisture Content and 94% purity.

Records from the Provincial Economist/Acting Provincial Operation Officer (POO), Ms. Cheryl Marie V. Echiverri show that actual palay procurement last year reached 344 bags or a 172% accomplishment over the 200 bags target. This is due to the efforts and initiative ex-

erted by the NFA-Negros Oriental Procurement Team headed by the Provincial Manager, Dr. Carlos S. Cortes. For this year, procurement target reached 500 bags which would mean more challenges and efforts for NFA-Negros Oriental.

The massive procurement of palay was the marching order by NFA's new administrator, Mr. Orlan Agbin Calayag in order to serve more farmers especially in far-flung areas.

The massive procurement of palay is an action geared towards Rice Self-Sufficiency and in one with the policy

statement of President Benigno Simeon C. Aquino III in his second State of the Nation Address (SONA) that goes:

"Ang gusto nating mangyari
- Una hindi na tayo angkat ng hindi kailangan
- Ikalawa, ayaw nating umasa sa pag-angkat
- Ang isasaing ni Juan dela Cruz, dito ipupunla, dito aanihin, dito bibilhin..." (EMILY L. DIPUTADO, correspondent)

Reaching out to stakeholders through Ugnayan

NFA provincial offices in Region 7 conducted dialogues with stakeholders through the **Ugnayan** starting March this year. It is a continuing activity in various municipalities by a team composed of Public Affairs, Industry Services, and Enforcement and Operations Sections.

In order to have a smooth flow of the activity, the provincial offices coordinated with the Local Government Units as well as Municipal Agriculturists of the Department of Agriculture for the scheduling, venue and participation of farmers, farmer organizations, grains retailers and

consumer groups.

Topics discussed during the "Ugnayan" are the various programs of the NFA such as procurement, licensing, grains standardization and rice fortification. On procurement, the NFA informed the farmers about its improved procurement strategies particularly the simplified requirements for the issuance of farmer's passbook to bonafide individual or farmers group. They are encouraged to sell their palay produce to NFA and assured of immediate release of check payments.

On rice fortification program,

health benefits of eating iron fortified rice were imparted to the participants. The team likewise enjoined the participants to help the NFA in the advocacy campaign on rice conservation in support of the 2013 National Year of Rice pursuant to Presidential Proclamation 494 which pro-

motes responsible rice consumption to prevent wastage towards rice self sufficiency beginning 2013.

The "Ugnayan" solicited varied reactions from the stakeholders who expressed admiration for NFA's all out support to farmers while clamoring for an in-

crease in the NFA buying price for palay. Clarifications with regard to grains licensing policies were raised. Some expressed apprehensions on buying NFA iron fortified rice considering its appearance. The NFA team noted the reactions and clarifications raised and the same were presented to the regional management. (**LUCY ROSALES**, *correspondent*)

Region 8

Aggressive palay procurement across the region

NFA Regional Manager Vilma H. Zarraga said the Agency is still on its aggressive palay procurement mode to augment domestic inventory of the basic staple.

She revealed that for the first quarter of this year, the agency was able to procure a total of 13,979 bags region wide. "This is a 233% accomplishment since the agency targeted 6,000 bags only for the first quarter," she said. Director Zarraga said that the NFA in the region was able to disburse a total of P8,096,749.00 from its Cereal Procurement Fund (CPF), the financial source of NFA's palay buying operations.

"Even as we have surpassed our targets this quarter, we are aiming to procure more palay in the succeeding days and months," Director Zarraga underscored.

Under NFA's palay procurement program, the food agency buys palay at the current government support price of P17.00 per kilogram, clean and dry or those with 14% moisture content and "Purity A" level. Palay deliveries falling below this specification can also be accommodated subject to buying price adjustments computed in accordance with the current NFA Equivalent Net Weight (ENW) table.

On top of the basic support price, additional incentives are given to palay farmers. For every kilogram of palay sold to the NFA, there is a P0.20 drying incentive and a delivery incentive fee of P0.20 or P10.00 per kilogram based on the distance from the farm to the NFA buying station within zero to 10 kilometers. This delivery incentive escalates as the distance of the farm to NFA buying station increases.

Moreover, farmer groups or cooperatives gain an add-on of P0.30 per kilogram of palay sold to the food agency as their Cooperative Development Incentive Fee (CDIF). The accumulated CDIF can be used by the concerned farmer cooperative to acquire post-harvest facilities.

Director Zarraga encourages all palay farmers and farmer cooperatives to sell their produce to the Agency. She said that the NFA has simplified requirements for its palay procurement program. To mention a few, farmer's passbook is now free of charge with photo provided by NFA. Moreover, walk-in farmers now deliver a maximum of 200 bags.

"One of the factors that contributed much to the increase in NFA's procurement accomplishment is its simplified requirements," Director Zarraga continued. "We also conducted Ugnayan or advocacy prior to harvest and closely coordinated with the Local Government Units (LGU), Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), National Irrigation Administration (NIA),

farmers groups and barangay officials.

Moreover, we undertook close monitoring of palay harvests, timely positioned the necessary logistics and opened buying stations in strategic production areas. This way, we have encouraged the palay farmers to sell their produce to us, Director Zarraga concluded. (**MARY AGNES R. MILITANTE**, *correspondent*)

Additional buying station

NFA Naval Provincial Office has opened a buying station at Consuegra, Leyte-Leyte and deployed a procurement team composed of Milagros O. Caneja, ECO III as team leader, Sisinio B. Ceniza, GOA II as classifier & Armelita D. Seno as Special Disbursing Officer (SDO) starting March 16.

This is the first time that NFA-Biliran opened a buying station outside Naval. The team diligently conducted information dissemination to the farmers of Consuegra, Leyte-Leyte with the help of Bgy. Chair Antonio Benitiz who suggested visiting some farmers in Sitio Pantalan and even in Sitio Palid where farmers own big ricefields. The place is almost 4 kilometers from the NFA buying station, has rough roads and not passable by "Habal-Habal" (motor vehicle), so the team had to walk and even cross a hanging bridge made of bamboo in order to reach the place. Team leader, Ms. Caneja, got scared and almost wanted to go back but still they continued and reached Sitio Palid safely.

The NFA team visited Brgy. Ugbon and Brgy. Wague informing and en-

couraging the farmers to sell their produce to NFA. Likewise, farmers were informed that they may deliver a maximum of 200 bags and that farmer's passbook is free of charge to individual farmer/Farmer Organization (FOs) and Farmer Cooperatives.

NFA Naval surpassed its target for the month of March and April 2013. (**ARMELITA D. SENO**, *correspondent*)



The NFA procurement team crosses a hanging bridge to buy palay directly from farmers.

Northern Samar surpasses palay procurement targets

Across the Country 17

NFA Northern Samar Provincial Office exceeded its palay procurement target from March to May 2013. Starting March, NFA N. Samar bought a total of 1,376 bags or 137.60% accomplishment of its 1,000 bags target for the month. In April, the province registered the biggest procurement for the quarter buying 9,878 bags or 987.80% more than the 1,000 bags target. This May, the office bought 1,534 bags or 153.40% more than the 1,000 bags target, buying a total of 12,843 bags or 428.10% higher than the targeted 3,000 bags.

Palay procurement of NFA N.

Samar from March to May 2013 averaged at 140 bags daily. Provincial Manager Ruben M. Manatad credited the high procurement volumes to the innovative methods employed by the provincial management through aggressive “ugnayan” with farmers, radio broadcasting and the dedication and support of personnel to the Department of Agriculture's Food Staples Sufficiency Program (FSSP) aimed at attaining rice self-sufficiency for the country in the years to come.

N. Samar's total inventory as of May 17, 2013 stands at 16,479 bags or

519.08 metric tons in total rice equivalent, including local rice stocks of 20,062 bags and imported rice totaling 15,841 bags.

PM Manatad said that the province's buffer stock is at a safe level, always ready to respond to any calamities and other emergencies that may occur in the coming months. With enough funds available, PM Manatad is optimistic that the office will continue to exceed its procurement targets for the rest of the year. The office operates a total of three buying stations and mobile procurement teams provincewide. **(ROGER E. GERIANE, correspondent)**

N. Leyte's procurement operations: An Overwhelming Success

From less to plenty.

This is exactly the way to describe NFA N. Leyte Provincial Office's successful procurement operations for the dry cropping season of 2013. Compared to the volume the office procured in the past year which totaled to 3,761 bags, it rose to a whopping 67,470 bags (as of May 23, 2013) for this cropping season alone. This is a remarkable 1,694% increase from last year's accomplishment or a 499.07% accomplishment of its approved target for the year (15,000 bags) and 80.67% accomplishment of its silent target of 83,500 bags for 2013 (data as of May 23, 2013). A total of P55,382,770.57 was disbursed to pay for the deliveries of individual farmers and farmer groups to the various warehouses and buying stations created for this purpose.

Months before harvest season began, Provincial Manager Isagani T. Nicandro issued a memorandum encouraging all employees to go out of their respective neighborhoods and conduct house to house campaigns regarding the procurement activities of NFA. Employees were assigned in pairs and were deployed to different municipalities identified to be rice-producing areas such as Dagami, Babatngon, Palo, Tanauan, Tolosa, San Miguel, Barugo, Alangalang, Javier, Abuyog, Mayorga, MacArthur, Matag-ob, Sta. Fe, Pastrana, Basey and Sta. Rita. Before actual deployment, a briefing was held last February 22, 2013, spearheaded by Asst. Provincial Manager Guadelyn O. Esperancilla. She discussed the enhanced procurement strategies and answered all queries and clarifications of participants. SGOO/PSQAO Victorino Abrugar on the other hand, discussed the ENWF table.

Procurement campaigns started February 25, 2013 and ended March 05, 2013. The teams visited the offices of local leaders (mayors and barangay officials) and talked with individual farmers and leaders of pre-identified farmer groups and irrigator's associations. They distributed information materials and asked for the contact numbers of focal persons for easier communication. Their discussions revealed the harvest period of each town visited which the NFA N. Leyte Office took note of.

UGNAYAN activities with farmers were also conducted to further inform them of the NFA procurement program. Several farmer groups sent letters inviting the UGNAYAN team to their respective barangays. The team held meetings in Brgy. Cuta, Barugo, Leyte on March 05, 2013, in Brgy. Hinulogan, Dagami, Leyte per invitation of the Guinarona Zone I Irrigator's Association and SIDLIT FISCO on March 12, 2013. A meeting at the NFA Regional Office Conference Room was participated in by Leyte Brgy. Agrarian Reform Officers and members (DAR-NFA Partnership) on March 13, 2013. Another meeting was held in Brgy. Aslum, Alangalang Leyte on March 14, 2013. The team, composed of APM Guadelyn O. Esperancilla, SGOO/PSQAO Victorino A. Abrugar, SGOO/PISO Pascualito C. Angel and Clerk III/PIO designate Ella Vircelle C. Estoya, discussed NFA's mandates, programs, including the enhanced procurement strategies and the ENWF Table. The team also answered all questions and clarifications aired by the attendees regarding NFA operations and programs.

As a move to ensure security of personnel and stocks to be procured at the different buying stations, Provincial Manager Nicandro, thru APM Esperancilla, wrote to the Regional Director of the

Leyte Provincial Police Office requesting support from the local police force by detailing police officers to the buying stations to be opened. The Regional Director responded positively. Police officers were detailed at Matag-ob, Dagami, San Miguel, and Abuyog Buying Stations.

Come harvest time, NFA N. Leyte Provincial Office utilized different modes of procurement. Aside from the existing NFA warehouses, mobile procurement was also activated last March 06, 2013 using NFA Leyte-owned truck. Various buying stations were opened free of charge/rental at strategic areas. Among these are the Matag-ob Buying Station which started accepting deliveries last March 04, 2013; Abuyog Buying Station which opened last March 26, 2013; San Miguel Buying Station on April 03, 2013 and Dagami Buying Station on April 23, 2013. All procurement teams did their share and extended their efforts to serve the farmers by accommodating deliveries even during weekends, holidays and even until late hours at night.

Despite all challenges faced amidst unpredictable weather, security of stocks, and human limitations, NFA N. Leyte Provincial Office was able to accomplish much in the duration of its palay procurement operations. With the harvest season almost done, the agency is grateful to all farmers who supported the agency's procurement program. Appreciation also goes to all local leaders and personalities who contributed to the success of this endeavor.

This achievement is proof that through effective and efficient leadership, teamwork and synergy, all undertakings are possible. With another cropping season in mind, the NFA N. Leyte Provincial Office is optimistic that it can reach, if not surpass its silent target for the year 2013. **(ELLA VIRCELLE C. ESTOYA, correspondent)**

Top procurement team in E. Samar

Part of the strategies of the Procurement Team in Oras, Eastern Samar is going out to the northern outskirts of the province to disseminate NFA's palay procurement system to the farmers and farmer organizations, in close coordination with the Municipal Agriculture Officers (MAO) and Agricultural Technicians (AT) in the municipalities of Dolores, Oras and San Policarpo, Eastern Samar.

The team is composed of MPOIII Alan Lavado as the classifier, Clerk IV Alita Arcueno as the Special Disbursing Officer (SDO) and is spearheaded by an ever energetic team leader WSII Nonito Aguilar.

Starting from day 1, the team adopted a number of strategies to be able to procure more. Among the pre-procurement activities done under the direction of Provincial Manager Atty. Arturo Macabag are:

1. The coordination with the MAO and Municipal Mayor Emiliana Villacarillo in Dolores, Eastern Samar to disseminate the program;

2. Coordination with the AT and even a house to house campaign among large palay producers in San Policarpo, Eastern Samar;

3. Coordination with Municipal

Mayor Alvarez in Oras, Eastern Samar;

4. Attendance in the Farmers' Graduation Rites in Brgy. Dampigan and Brgy. Dap-dap, Dolores, Eastern Samar to disseminate the procurement program; and

5. Airing an information material via broadcast media at a primetime slot.

The team continues to be more aggressive in its local palay procurement operation which enabled it to procure 8,960 bags of palay as of April 2013. The team placed number 1 in terms of quantity/volume procured among the three warehouses/offices in the province. **(MILAGROS BAGAS, correspondent)**

Seminars and Ugnayan raise procurement volume

Intensified efforts in reaching out to farmers regarding NFA's palay procurement program through NFA-sponsored seminars such as IRPEP Briefing and Ugnayan activities proved effective in attaining a high procurement volume of palay in Western Samar.

It was through the series of IRPEP briefings in different palay-producing areas in Samar that the local NFA office promoted its palay procurement program such as the adoption of cash payment rather than checks and the hassles of securing a farmer's passbook and seeking different certifications before being allowed to sell their produce to the agency.

Farmer-participants during the briefings signed a commitment to sell about 10 percent of their produce to NFA. Their signature and their positive response is a good sign of the agency's attainment of its targets.

Another way towards achieving the high palay procurement volume was by explaining to prospective farmer-clientele about the advantages of selling their produce to the NFA which offers a higher price aside from giving them an opportunity to contribute to the government's goal towards rice self-sufficiency. Private traders, having profit as its main objective, might resort to dirty tactics such as dishonest weighing, but NFA just wants to help them by giving a just and fair price for their produce.

Establishing a smooth relationship with the farmers and serving them well by listening to them and providing necessary explanations to their queries is also a factor that contributed to the high procurement volume in W. Samar. Farmers who sold their palay during the past procurement activities of NFA were contacted and asked if they are still willing to

sell to the agency. Also, they were asked to inform their friends regarding the NFA's procurement program. Those frequent customers were "treasured" and together with the walk-in sellers, NFA-Samar obtained a huge accomplishment percentage.

Extra sacrifice from the procurement team who used their own resources such as money and motorcycles just to reach out to farmers and be able to inform them regarding the procurement program of NFA is also a factor. Two members of

the procurement team brought with them their motorcycles to be used in the procurement activities—one in Patong Buying Station another in Mambog Buying Station. In one instance at Patong Buying Station, a sample was priced at more or less 13.95 per kilo after classification. However, the farmer asked if it could be priced at 14 per kilo. Western Samar Manager Francisca T. Mercado, who was at the buying station that time, asked the farmer to deliver his produce and she's going to shoulder the remaining 5 cents a kilo. **(BERNABE MABAG, correspondent)**

Region 9



WOMEN'S DAY. NFA-IX female employees during the celebration of the National Women's Day on March 8, 2013 with the theme: "Kababaihan, Gabay sa Pagtahak sa Tuwid na Daan." The event was spearheaded by the City Government of Zamboanga through the Gender and Development (GAD) Focal Point. It kicked off with a march dubbed "Marchas De las Mujeres," a march for a cause which started at 7:00 a.m. from the City Hall grounds towards the sports complex of Zamboanga City, where a short program was held. Donations in the form of cash or in kind like goods and clothing benefited the women in the city particularly those who are detained at the Zamboanga City jail, the psychiatric ward of the Zamboanga City Medical Center, and the Women and Children's Desk of the City Police Station. **(ANGELICA M. PELLIE, correspondent)**



DA REMANCOM. NFA Region 9 Director Dianne A. Silva speaks during the DA-Regional Management Committee Meeting called by DA Region 9 Regional Executive Director Eduardo B. Holoyohoy (seated, in yellow shirt) last March 18 at the DA-RFU9 Conference Room, Zamboanga City. Silva reported on the status of NFA operations in the Sabah Crisis/Tabang Basulta (Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi). As a result, the DA-RMC9 prepared its action plan for the Oplan Tabang Basulta where the NFA Regional Director actively participated. RD Silva also reported that the NFA is on a 24-hour milling operations in NFA Molave, Zamboanga del Sur and as to palay procurement operation, as of March 18, Region 9 has already accomplished 102% of its palay procurement target for March. Silva also mentioned that NFA Zamboanga del Sur has extended assistance to Polanco Employees Cooperative (POEMCO) by buying their palay stocks of 1,200 bags. (ANGELICA M. PELLIN, correspondent)



PALAY PROCUREMENT. NFA-IX employees in Zamboanga del Norte pile their procured palay using a conveyor. Through the leadership of RD Dianne A. Silva, NFA 9 Zamboanga del Norte, managed by PM Regino L. Delfin, intensified its palay procurement strategies by deploying two mobile procurement teams a day including weekends to procure clean and dry and even wet palay with 24% to 30% tolerable moisture content. With the target of 11,000 bags at 50 kg, for the month of February 2013, Zamboanga del Norte exceeded its target by 17.47% with an actual accomplishment of 12,092 bags. (ANGELICA M. PELLIN, correspondent)

Refresher Course for Palay Procurement Teams and Allied Personnel

Through the initiatives of RD Dianne A. Silva and ARD John Robert R. Hermano, a self-help in-house Refresher Course for Palay Procurement Teams and Allied Personnel of the NFA Provincial Offices/Regional Office was successfully conducted at the Regional Office of NFA Region IX, San Roque, Zamboanga City on February 17-19, 2013.

The participants to this seminar were the Procurement Team Leaders/Warehouse Supervisors, Quality Assurance Officers, Senior/Special Disbursing Officers, Mechanical Plant Operators, Accountants/Voucher Processors, Information Officers, Administrative Officers or Provincial Operations Officer or Assistant Provincial Manager and Provincial Managers.

The general objective of the refresher course is for Region IX to be able to procure palay for buffer stocks build-up to attain the goals of the Food Self-sufficiency program of the government.

The course was composed of 4 modules such as:

• **MODULE 1—KNOWING OURSELVES AND OTHERS**



The NFA-IX procurement teams and allied personnel posed with ARD John Robert R. Hermano (seated, 1st from left), Davao City PM Engr. Felimon Cangreo, RD Dianne A. Silva, DA-ARD Dennis Palabrica and NIA Engineer Vivren Apatan, after the closing ceremony of the 3-day Refresher Course for NFA Region 9 Palay Teams and Allied Personnel initiated by the RD and ARD of Region 9. (ANGELICA M. PELLIN, correspondent)

- Interpersonal Relationship with Co-workers and Others (Self, Self-Esteem, Positive & Negative Self-Esteem behaviors)

- Leadership and Building a Cohesive Working Team (Leadership, Team-

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work and Motivation)

•MODULE 2 - KNOWING OUR AGENCY

- National Food Authority, the agency
- NFA's Mission and Vision
- NFA's Plans and Programs

•MODULE 3 - KNOWING OUR COMMODITY

- Anatomy of Palay Grains
- Harvesting, Threshing and Drying Palay
- The New Varietal Codes for Palay and ENW Table
- Workshop on Analysis of Palay

•MODULE 4 - KNOWING OUR JOB

- Palay Procurement and Documentation
 - NFA Price Difference compared to Traders
- Speakers RD Silva, ARD Her-

mano, RSQAO Felimon Quiambao, Engr. Felimon T. Cangrejo, provincial manager of NFA Davao City, and Regional Accountant Edwina C. Bernad aimed to equip the participants with the right attitude to be more friendly and to make farmers feel that NFA is always ready to serve its clientele and to build a cohesive working team. They also provided the procurement team members with better understanding of the NFA of today, its mission and vision, plans and programs, thorough understanding of the commodity that they are handling, and the basic principles to preserve and protect the same and the current basic and specific policies/guidelines/instructions relative to NFA Palay Procurement Programs, in order for the team to effectively discharge their duties and responsibilities and sell NFA and its programs to farmers, other stakeholders and LGUs with the help of line agencies and the media.

Guest speaker from the Department of Agriculture (DA) RFU 9 Ms. Ma-

ria Melba Wee, chief of the Information Division, presented the 2013 National Year of Rice Program of the DA or the NYR 2013. She emphasized that NYR 2013 primarily aims to help achieve rice self-sufficiency through the help of every Filipino. Along with that, it also aims to promote better health among rice consumers, and improve the income of farmers. She also stressed on the DA-NYR Program tagline –“Konti-konting kanin muna at kumain din ng brown rice, sapat na bigas, kaya ng Pinas!”

On the last day of the course, workshop on palay procurement goal setting was done per province. RD Dianne asked the Provincial Managers to present their respective goal setting strategies and work plan which the latter did, after which, the Lady Director made the Provincial Managers to commit themselves in the attainment of their individual targets.

The Principal Engineer of NIA and the Assistant Regional Director of the DA graced the closing program of the refresher course. (**ANGELICA M. PELLIEN**, *correspondent*)

Region 10



UGNAYAN. PISO Laura C. Pelletero (third from left), POO Rosita M. Tabugo (extreme left) and Acting PIO Lenona Lenette B. Mantos (extreme right) pose with farmers during the Ugnayan activity at Barangay Cabasagan, Lala, Lanao del Norte on February 22, 2013. (**LENONA LENETTE B. MANTOS**, *correspondent*)

A VOW FROM THE HEART. OIC Sambitory O. Dimaporo (in white shirt) recites the Panatang Makapalay together with Lala Mayor Allan J. Lim (in brown shirt) and Usec. Joel S. Rudinas (third from left) during the Provincial Launching of the National Year of Rice last March 21, 2013 at Lala Municipal Hall, Lala, Lanao del Norte. (**LENONA LENETTE B. MANTOS**, *correspondent*)





OIC Sambitory O. Dimaporo explains the various programs of NFA to farmers during the Ugnayan @ Barangay Lala Proper, Lala, Lanao del Norte on February 15, 2013. (LENONA LENETTE B. MANTOS, correspondent)

Region 11



REMANCOM in Digos

The meeting was presided by ARD Lester Romeo E. Malana with RD Edgar S. Bentulan, NFA RXI Provincial Managers and the Regional Staff in attendance. The meeting focused on the Palay Procurement Accomplishment for January to April 2013. Assessment/evaluation was presented by NFA RXI Provincial Managers particularly production data and procurement strategies. The Regional Evaluation Team (RET) presented/discussed their observations on the 2013 procurement operations. They are Regional Economist Enesa B. Alatan on documentation, Regional Accountant Romana M. Lucas on financial matters & Regional Senior Quality Assurance Officer Crisanta G. Arindaeng on quality of palay for procurement. The RET Team emphasized the importance of reporting early in the warehouses/buying stations as they discussed procurement strategies. RD Bentulan gave a feedback about the conference

he recently attended in Baguio City.

All were happy by the surprise visit of Dir. Danilo Pastrana during the

conference. He is retiring effective July 21, 2013 and expressed his heartfelt thanks to all executives, staff and employees who supported him during his stay in NFA RXI. (ALMA T. SAÑADA, correspondent)

Oathtaking in Sarangani

NFA General Santos Provincial Manager Edegary H. Roncal ang acting RIO Alma T. Sañada recently attended the Sarangani Province Oath of Office of elected Provincial Officials and Turn-Over Ceremony. The oath-taking and turn-over ceremonies was highlighted by the turn-over address of outgoing Sarangani Gov. Miguel Rene Dominguez, who is ending his third straight term as governor on June 30, and the inaugural addresses of Rep. Emmanuel D. Pacquiao and the incoming Gov. Steve Chiongbian-Solon and Vice Gov. Maria Geraldine "Jinkee" Pacquiao. The Board Members, Mayors, and Vice-Mayors also took their oath and was administered

by Rep. Emmanuel D. Pacquiao.

Sarangani Province elected and re-elected local officials pledged to pursue good governance to serve Sarangani constituents especially in their health problems and education. The newly-installed officials also shared their dreams and wonderful vision for Sarangani's future in their inaugural address.

The oath-taking of the city officials Mayor Ronnel Rivera, Vice Mayor Shirlyn Nograles and the elected city council members was held at 2:00 p.m. inside the City Hall Building, General Santos City. (ALMA T. SAÑADA, correspondent)

The Provincial Farmers Action Council (PFAC) of General Santos City met at the NFA Provincial Office (RL Section) on June 27, 2013 with PFAC Chairman Edwin Y. Paraluman presiding. It was attended by 12 PFAC officers and members represented by officers from different municipalities except Maasin and Malapatan. One of the main topics discussed was the Institutionalized Farmers As Distributors (IFAD) program. Mr. Paraluman also encouraged the farmers to participate in the Sale through market determined pricing (SMDP) of 2010 stocks. He assured to support the procurement program of the NFA SarGen (Sarangani and General Santos) and asked the commitment of his members.

Provincial Manager Edegary H. Roncal informed the participants about the palay procurement accomplishment and expressed her appreciation to the Farmer Leaders providing strong support and assistance to NFA Gensan procurement target for food security. She urged them to sell their upcoming palay harvest to NFA.

Provincial Investigation and Secu-



Mgr. Eds Roncal (left) discussing the NFA palay procurement and thanking the participation of the SarGen (Sarangani and General Santos) farmers in the procurement program of NFA.

urity Officer Marilyn B. Saliganan informed the farmer leaders about their Cooperative Development Incentive Fee (CDIF) status explaining that in order to maintain their

CDIF accounts active this could be done through palay deliveries to NFA. They will be notified concerning their CDIF balances. (ALMA T. SAÑADA, correspondent)



PILES OF PALAY. Palay stocks are piled outside "Pablo" ravaged warehouse/buying station in Cateel, Davao Oriental. (ALMA T. SAÑADA, correspondent)

PROCUREMENT. Palay is received for bagging right from the thresher. (ALMA T. SAÑADA, correspondent)





WEIGHING. Palay stocks are weighed outside this warehouse in Cateel, Davao Oriental. Wet palay are transferred to the Banaybanay warehouse. (ALMA T. SAÑADA, correspondent)



INSPECTION. Procurement Team leader Alma T. Sañada (right) inspects rebagged palay in Mawab, Compostela Valley. (ALMA T. SAÑADA, correspondent)



FARMERS IN WAITING. Farmers await their turn to sell their produce in Carmen, Davao del Norte. (ALMA T. SAÑADA, correspondent)



NFA Region 12 Acting Regional Manager Raul B. Chong (extreme left) poses for a souvenir photo with Agriculture Secretary Proceso J. Alcala at the DA Seed Farm, Tupi, South Cotabato together with members of the DA-12 REMANCOM. (MARISSA O. NUÑEZ, correspondent)



GSIS Regional Manager Manampan (2nd from left) receives his Certificate of Appreciation from Region XII Acting Director Raul B. Chong (left), ARD Pangallian Busran (2nd from right), and PM Fernando Nuñez (right).

GSIS conducts briefing on retirement

For the employees to widen their knowledge about the retirement modes and other social insurances and benefits from GSIS, Provincial Manager Fernando S. Nunez took the initiative to invite GSIS personnel to conduct a briefing.

The lecture was participated in by all NFA Sultan Kudarat employees, Regional Administrative Officer Gerry Baquiran, Administrative Officers Lerma Maranan of Kidapawan and Gerry Martinico of South

Cotabato. The resource person was GSIS Regional Manager Diety U. Manampan.

The briefing focused on retirement benefits and options that employees could avail of after retirement. This would prepare them especially those who are planning to retire soon on what mode of retirement they would prefer.

The briefing provided thorough understanding about the different programs and benefits being offered by GSIS.



NFA Region 12 Assistant Regional Manager Pangallian B. Busran (left) delivers his welcome message during the Department of Agriculture RFO-12 6th Agri Pinoy Caravan "Ulat sa Bayan" at Bololmala, Tupi South Cotabato while Acting Regional Operations Officer Roque C. Hilario presented NFA's Accomplishment Report for the months of January-April 2013.

The employees were given the opportunity to ask the speaker about issues and concerns with GSIS.

The briefing ended by the awarding of Certificate of Appreciation to GSIS Regional Manager Manampan for the time and support he had given to NFA Sultan Kudarat employees. (ROSELIE VILLARAIZ TUTOR, correspondent)



A firefighter shows the right way to extinguish fire.

Kidapawan celebrates Fire Prevention Month

NFA employees actively participated in the Earthquake and Fire Drill conducted by the City Government of Kidapawan and the Bureau of Fire Protection during the 1st Quarter Nationwide Earthquake and Fire Drill for Critical Infrastructure last March 25, 2013, where NFA was chosen as the host.

A team composed of City Information Officer Psalmer Bernalte, Fire Officer I Gerry Anunciado, Michael Irvin Ablang and Jefferson Sevilla gave a brief lecture on the do's and don'ts during earthquake and safety tips in relation to fire prevention. They also gave assistance to the employees who tried to put out the fire as part of the actual fire drill. They clearly defined the functions and responsibilities of employees and gave clearer picture and heightened awareness about various disaster hazards and how to survive them.

IO Psalmer Bernalte said, "This activity primarily aims to come up with measures to protect and save lives and prevent damage to infrastructure during incidence of earthquakes and fires." (SHERRYL V. POLO, *correspondent*)

*NFA employees participated in the Diskwento Caravan - Balik Eskwela of the Department of Trade and Industry in cooperation with the City Government of Kidapawan last May 6-18, 2013. (SHERRYL V. POLO, *correspondent*)*



TREE PLANTING. NFA-NCO PM Avelino M. Usman poses with members of the Ladies Circle during the tree-planting activity at the NFA-NCO compound. (SHERRYL V. POLO, *correspondent*)



NYR 2013 launch at NCOT

NFA Provincial Manager Avelino M. Usman, together with some NFA-NCOT employees, attended the launching of the provincial National Year of Rice (NYR) 2013 at the Provincial Capitol Pavilion recently.

Various Farmer Organizations, Cooperatives, Irrigator's Associations from all over North Cotabato province and line agencies were also there to show their commitment and support to the government's effort for a rice self-sufficient country.

"Studies show that it takes 12 years for a single grain of rice we eat to get to our plate and rice-eating Filipinos are now over 60M todate," according to Provincial Agriculturist Eliseo M. Mangliwan. The very reason why there's a need for us to lessen, if not eliminate the two tablespoon of rice we waste daily totalling to P6.2 billion that can already feed at least 2.6M Filipinos for a year.

Dr. John Pascual, representing Regional ED Amalia J. Datukan, emphasized the need for increasing farmers' yield per hectare considering the doubled Agri-Pinoy Rice Fund. NYR 2013 aims to help the farmers find ways to use new technologies to increase production and lessen food wastage to achieve its theme, "Sapat na Bigas, Kaya ng Pinas!", he said.

The launching was highlighted by the recitation of the *Panatang Makapalay*, a raffle draw, and the unveiling of the NYR 2013 logo. (**SHERRY V. POLO**, *correspondent*)

NFA joins KABISIG Government Expo 2013

The National Food Authority joined other government agencies in the KABISIG Philippine Government Expo and Trade Fair last June 10, 11 and 12 at the Megatrade Hall 2 of SM Megamall in Mandaluyong City in time for the celebration of the 115th Philippine Independence Day.

The three-day affair started at 3:00 p.m. on June 10, 2013 with a ceremonial ribbon-cutting headed by guest speaker Secretary Herminio B. Coloma, Jr., of the Presidential Communications Operations Office (PCOO). The Secretary, together with Mandaluyong Councilor Alexander Santa Maria rendered their welcome remarks in front of the employees of the participating government institutions.

The team from NFA is composed of personnel from the Department of Public Affairs (DPA), Technical Research and



Dir. Raul B. Chong (2nd from left), PM Fernando S. Nuñez (left) with officials of the San Antonio Farmers MPC during its 8th General Assembly and NFA Ugnayan at San Antonio, Tacurong City.

Sultan Kudarat reaches out to the farmers and irrigators associations

The National Food Authority is entrusted with the role of ensuring the food security of the country and the stability of supply and price of the staple grain-rice. To achieve food security and stable supply and price of the staple, the NFA-Sultan Kudarat headed by PM Fernando S. Nunez conducted a series of Ugnayan throughout the province.

The Ugnayan tackled the NFA's

functions and various activities and strategies, which include procurement of palay from individual bonafide farmers and their organizations, buffer stocking, processing activities, dispersal of palay and milled rice to strategic locations and distribution of the staple grain to various marketing outlets at appropriate times of the year. (**ROSELIE VILLARAIZ TUTOR**, *correspondent*)

National Capital Region



Mallgoers visit the NFA booth during the 2013 KABISIG Trade Expo

Services Department (TRSD) both in Central Office and the South District Office (SDO) in NCR. The contingent took part

in the activity by promoting the nutritional value of Iron Fortified Rice (IFR), handed out flyers, magazines and fan boards to in-

terested mall goers and to other delegates from other government agencies. NFA iron fortified rice was sold at P27/kg and was also made available for free taste during the three-day activity.

This year's theme was "Kaalaman ng Mamamayan: Kabalik sa Matuwid na Daan". Each participant conducted seminars, exhibits, techno demo, and dissemination of informational materials and raffle of prizes throughout the event.

The affair officially ended with the awarding of certificates and acknowledgments from KABISIG Chairman Mr. Daniel Guillen and inspirational words from Mr. Chinkee Tan, a former TV & movie actor, comedian and writer, and now a wealth coach and motivational speaker. **(MIRAQUEL D. HERNANDEZ, correspondent)**

GRECON holds general assembly at SDO

NFA accredited retailers from the eight cities and municipalities within Manila's District III areas gathered in Taguig City last April 19 when the Confederation of Grains Retailers Association of the Philippines (GRECON) South District chapter held its First General Assembly for year 2013.

With the theme, "Strengthen and Rebuild our Sector for the New Generation and for the Advancement of our Role in our Society" the participant retailers from Taguig, Pateros, Paranaque, Las Pinas, Mandaluyong, Makati, Muntinlupa, and Pasay agreed to have their induction for a new set of officers for SDO-GRECON chapter. Here is the result of the voting: Orlando Manuntag (President); Gulaberto Alsol (Vice President); Leticia Tapia (Appointed Secretary); Myra Tibri (Appointed Treasurer); Teresita Go (Auditor); and Alfred Ramos and Beverly Hernandez (Business Managers). A Board of Director representing each city/municipality was also elected during the event.

Among the guest speakers were GRECON National President Mr. Jaime Magbanua and GRECON-NCR President Ms. Lucila Damasco, both of whom solicited from the attendees their full support and cooperation, understanding and unity for a better and more productive confederation.

South District Office Provincial Manager Jaime Hadlocon formally opened the ceremony discussing the SDO retailers' situation and the upcoming NFA projects. Further, he said that SDO aims to target three to five new dedicated outlets per market. Mgr. Hadlocon also explained the reason for President Benigno Aquino's proclamation of the 2013 National Year of Rice and that everyone is enjoined to par-



RICE FOR EXPORT. Agriculture Secretary Proceso J. Alcala and NFA Administrator Orlan A. Calayag present to invited guests, participants and to the media the samples of repacked black rice during the inaugural send-off held recently at Manila Harbor Center where 15 tons of said rice variety is ready for export to Dubai. The Don Bosco Development Foundation in M'lang, North Cotabato has produced said variety that is aromatic and processed as premium grade Jasponica variety. This variety is produced by SL Agritech based in Talavera, Nueva Ecija. Also present during the send-off are NFA Assistant Administrator Celia Z. Tan and NFA-NCR Regional Director Joseph Y. dela Cruz. **(CAROLINA B. MANZANO, correspondent)**



SDO Manager Jaime Hadlocon speaks during the NFA-SDO Retailer's General Assembly last April 19 at the Uniden Compound of NFA-SDO in Taguig City. Seated beside him is GRECON National President Jaime Magbanua. **(MIRAQUEL D. HERNANDEZ, correspondent)**

ticipate in this advocacy.

Newly-elected GRECON-SDO Chapter President Mr. Orly Manuntag plans to have a regular monthly gathering

of retailers from the eight cities/municipalities to be held at the South District Office.

(MIRAQUEL D. HERNANDEZ, correspondent)

ARMM

Mobile licensing & registration of grains businessmen

As part of its continuing effort to pursue massive enforcement and monitoring of grains businessmen, the NFA Maguindanao Provincial Office conducted a thorough Mobile Licensing and Market

Inspection in the province. The Mobile licensing team was joined by NFA Maguindanao Provincial Manager Kitem P. Kadatuan who personally pursued grains businessmen and required them to license



The mobile licensing and market inspection team.

and register their business with the agency. Manager Kadatuan explained the provisions under PD No. 4 wherein grains businessmen should comply with the agency's rules and regulations before engaging in grains marketing because the NFA has the

power to cancel their business.

Businessmen engaged in grains and other products that manufacture or process grains as end product and big supermarkets that also sell rice were also inspected and advised to register to renew

their existing NFA licenses to avoid penalties. Aside from individual retailing fees, other lines of activities such as wholesaling, warehousing, milling, and others were required to file or renew their registration with the NFA.

Dispatching mobile licensing team is one of the strategies in order to implement the zero-grains businessmen without NFA License and to increase the number of applicants and registration/licensing fee (RL) collections for 2013 and beyond. PM Kadatuan was happy with the results of the mobile licensing activity because there's an increase in percentage on RL collections in the province and he was able to meet personally with the stakeholders and hear their sentiments and queries about the agency's programs and projects.

Kadatuan said mobile licensing in NFA Maguindanao is effective but it should be done with the right approach as grains businessmen are the agency's partners in ensuring the proper and efficient distribution of grains in the country. **(BAI NORHANNA M. BUTUCAN, correspondent)**



Farmers "Ugnayan" in Maguindanao

Some 100 farmers of North Upi Municipality in Maguindanao attended the Farmers Ugnayan last June 05, 2013 at the Upi Municipal Gymnasium, which was also part of North Upi's celebration of its 58th Foundation anniversary. The Ugnayan with farmers was headed by Regional Director Prof. Omar K. Kamid and Maguindanao Manager Kitem P. Kadatuan, and other provincial staff as resource persons.

Regional Operations Officer Bonifacio C. Antiquisa discussed the NFA's policies on procurement. He explained the NFA buying price of palay and the incen-

tives given to farmers such as the Cooperative Development Incentive Fee, granting a total of P50/kg for NFA accredited farmer organizations. Maguindanao Provincial Licensing Officer Naomi O. Adriano discussed the requirements for the application for farmer organizations and individual passbooks and the benefits of the individual farmers and organizations for accreditation with the NFA. SGOO Hermogenes Butalid discussed the Quality Standards of palay to be procured by the agency.

The Ugnayan was held through the cooperation of the Local Government

Unit of North Upi, Maguindanao under the leadership of Mayor Ramon A. Piang Sr., Provincial Agricultural Officer Salik Panalunsong, MAO Esmail Kamad and Engr. Nestor Espenilla of NIA Maguindanao. Re-elected Mayor Piang expressed his support to the programs of NFA which benefits the farmers of his municipality and the entire province as well. PM Kadatuan expressed his gratitude to North Upi Mayor Ramon Piang Sr., Vice Mayor Alexis Platoon and the members of his Council and to all the farmers who attended the Farmer's Ugnayan. **(BAI NORHANNA M. BUTUCAN, correspondent)**

Speakers' Bureau conducts Ugnayan series

NFA-Agusan del Sur speakers' bureau conducted "Ugnayan" at different barangays and municipalities of Agusan del Sur to enlighten farmers, local government units, barangay officials and representatives from the Department of Agriculture and Department of Agrarian Reform on the agency's various programs.

During the *Ugnayan*, OIC Gloria M. Tabayag presented an overview of NFA programs and encouraged farmers to sell their produce to NFA. POO Hugo Sarigumba, Jr. discussed the procurement strategies on NFA direct intervention which include requirements in securing Farmer's/Master's passbook, NFA buying price and the Cereal Procurement Fund (CPF) for every municipality of Agusan del Sur. He also mentioned the setting up of temporary buying stations only during harvest season at riverside towns of Agusan del Sur located in the Municipalities of Veruela, Loreto, La Paz and Talacogon.

Other NFA programs like Farmer's Option to Buy Back (FOBB), Farmer's Incentive Rice Purchase Program (FAIR), etc. were discussed by Registration and Licensing Officer, Ms. Maria Fe Castrodes. PSQAO Jenelita Loquete discussed the grains classification standards and demonstrated the determination of palay moisture content by using the digital moisture meter. SGOO Joel Villarino discussed the price comparison of palay buying price between traders and NFA.

An open forum followed where farmers raised common issues and concerns such as:

1. financial assistance from the agency
2. availability of trucks for hauling palay from the harvest area,
3. procurement of wet palay,
4. availability of mechanical driers,
5. preferred cash as mode of payment,
6. availability of empty sacks,
7. whether NFA will buy different varieties of palay?
8. If NFA will stop buying palay?



NFA Agusan del Sur provincial Manager Gloria Tabayag poses with farmers during an Ugnayan in Bgy. Sta. Teresa, Loreto, Agusan del Sur. (LORENA G. DANDAN, correspondent)

After the open forum, a representative from the Department of Agriculture or the Municipal Agricultural Officer (MAO) delivered a message. OIC Tabayag delivered the closing remarks. A picture taking with farmers and other participants ended the activity. (LORENA G. DANDAN, correspondent)



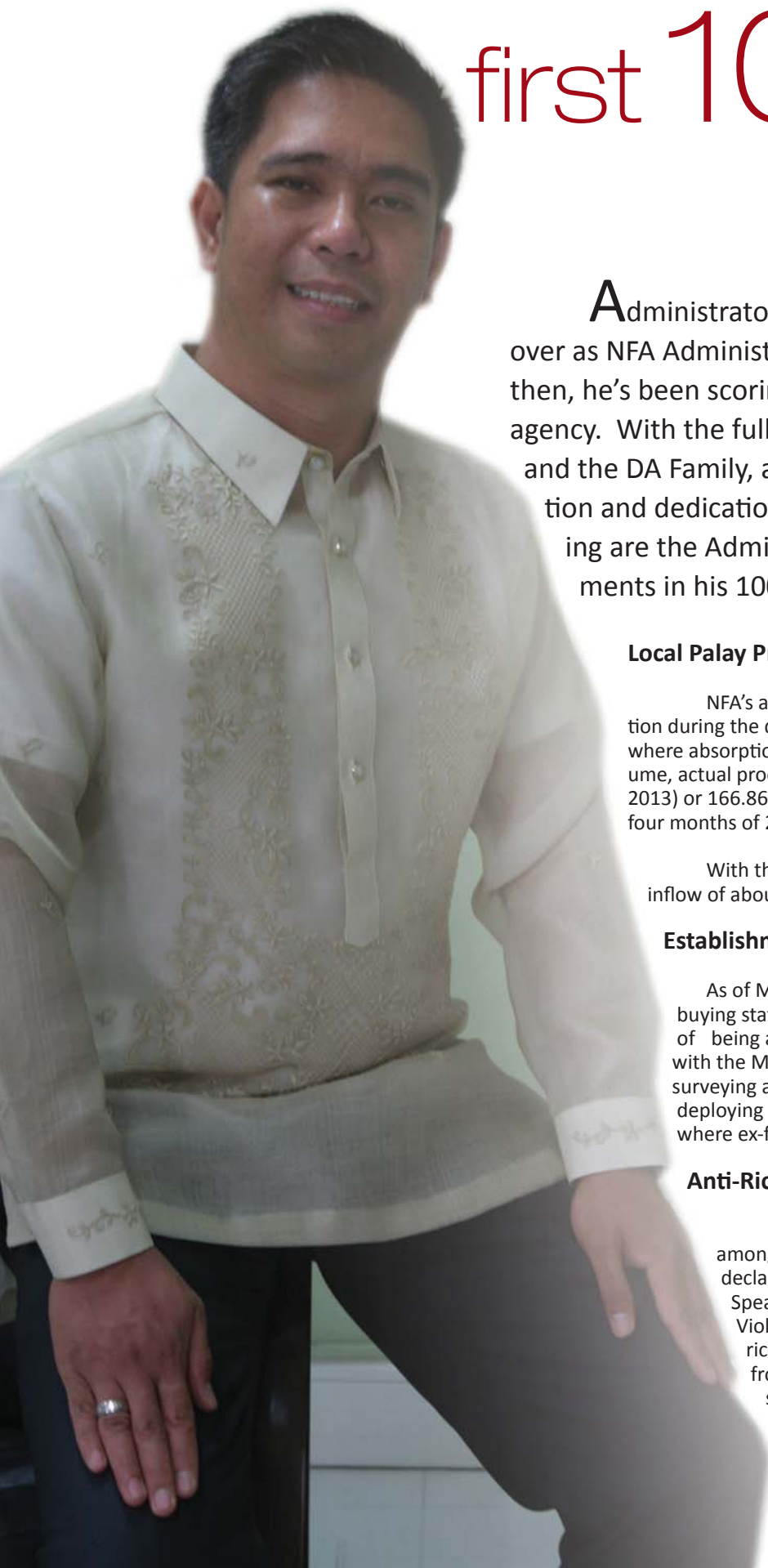
POO Hugo Sarigumba, Jr. discussed NFA procurement strategies during an Ugnayan with farmers in Bgy. Sta. Teresa, Loreto, Agusan del Sur. (LORENA G. DANDAN, correspondent)



NFA Agusan del Sur Provincial Manager Gloria Tabayag presenting an overview of NFA programs during the Ugnayan with farmers in Bgy. Sto. Tomas, Loreto, Agusan del Sur. (LORENA G. DANDAN, correspondent)

Special Report:

The Administrator's first 100 days in NFA



Administrator Orlan A. Calayag officially took over as NFA Administrator on January 17, 2013. Since then, he's been scoring major points as head of the food agency. With the full support of Secretary Proceso Alcala and the DA Family, and more importantly, the cooperation and dedication of all NFA employees, the following are the Administrator's highlights of accomplishments in his 100 days in office:

Local Palay Procurement

NFA's absorption of the country's national palay production during the dry season is at 2.47%, the highest after 25 years, where absorption rate averaged at only 3.40%. In terms of volume, actual procurement is 231,467 metric tons (January - April 2013) or 166.86% of its targeted 138,720 metric tons for the first four months of 2013.

With this level of procurement, NFA has facilitated the inflow of about P3.9 billion into the palay farming community.

Establishment of Buying Stations

As of May 2013, the agency established a total of 439 buying stations in far-flung areas wherein NFA's chance of being able to buy from farmers is greater; coordinating with the Municipal Agriculture Office (MAO) and surveying areas where harvesting is on-going; and deploying mobile procurement teams especially in areas where ex-farm prices are low.

Anti-Rice Smuggling

On February 22, 2013, a covenant was made among multi-sectoral groups of the rice industry, declaring their commitment to control rice smuggling. Spearheaded by Secretary Alcala, Congressman Violago, and NFA, the groups composed of farmers, rice traders, millers, processors, and retailers from Luzon committed not to buy, process, and sell smuggled rice.

Photo: NILO MANONGSONG

Increased Efficiency of Post-Harvest Facilities

The retrofitting of NFA's mechanical dryers with biomass furnace is underway, with the necessary full support from DA. Grain drying with biomass-furnaced dryers is more efficient, and environment-friendly. The drying cost with a kerosene-fed mechanical dryer at P44.17/bag, will be reduced by 67.92% to P14.17/bag with a biomass-furnaced dryer (with a 24.1% - 26% MC).

Buffer Stocking

As of May 1, 2013, NFA maintained an efficient 19-day level of the country's daily rice/food requirement. Close to the mandated 15-day buffer stocking level, the inventory of 611,838 metric tons is 99.6% good-quality stocks.

Relief Operations

Complementary to the DSWD's relief operations, NFA provided the rice requirements of the victims of the Sabah stand-off in Basilan, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi (BASULTA), in terms of 220,037 bags of rice shipped and made available in the areas.

Good Governance

NFA's pending cases are as follows: a) 30 labor cases; b) 78 administrative cases; c) 38 criminal cases; and d) 27 civil cases. To give teeth to the President's "Tuwid na Daan", NFA's field offices were briefed regarding the filing of cases at the provincial level. This will fast track the early resolution of cases.

NFA instituted compliance monitoring to such conditions as:
1. Agency Transparency Seal (Sec. 93 of the General Provisions of General Appropriations Act of 2012), with regular and timely updating

2. PhilGEPS posting of all Invitation to Bids and awarded contracts (Revised IRR of RA 9184)
3. Establishment of Citizen's Charter or its equivalent (RA 9485-ARTA)

Human Resource Management

To improve productivity, structured teambuilding activities were institutionalized and trainings were conducted.

Management Interaction

Regular visitation to the field offices in Baguio, Mt. Province, Davao, Cebu, Quezon, Occidental Mindoro, Roxas, Aklan, Cabanatuan, Laguna, Batangas, and Palawan.

With reports from CPMSD, GMOD, TRSD, & LAD

Administrator Orlan A. Calayag inspects a rice outlet in a public market in Manila. (Photo: MANING SADSAD)



Rice ready for distribution at this DSWD office in Tawi-Tawi. (Photo: MANING SADSAD)



A mechanical dryer at a warehouse in Allacapan. (Photo: CHARLIE DELA CRUZ)



Ample rice stored at this NFA warehouse. (Photo: MANING SADSAD)

The Emerging Southern Frontier

I came back to Tawi-Tawi because of an unfulfilled mission: to finally climb Bongao Peak. Now that I let you in on that little secret, I'm going to remind you to never leave a place without visiting their unique attractions. When this chance came, I immediately booked the next available flight and packed my bags.

Sabah connection

Recently, Tawi-Tawi figured prominently in the headlines during the Sabah standoff. It served as temporary shelter to Filipinos affected by the mass crackdown on illegal immigrants in Malaysia. Tawi-Tawi is only 5 hours away from Sipadan, the nearest Malaysian territory via fastcraft or just 30 to 40 minutes away via speedboat from Taganak, another municipality in Tawi-Tawi. Most of those who took refuge in Tawi-Tawi were former residents of Jolo, Zamboanga, Basilan, and Tawi-Tawi. When our group came, the issue had died down but we managed to see remnants of the temporary evacuation center in downtown Bongao and the makeshift military camp of the Royal Security Force (RSF) in

Simunul Island. The RSF, led by Crowned Prince Radjamudah Agbimuddin Kiram, camped, trained and regrouped in this area.

Sheik Makhdum

Simunul is home to the oldest mosque in the country. It was built by Saudi Sheik Karimul Makhdum who was believed to have settled in the island in 1380. Interestingly, the Sheik's tomb is located a stone's throw away from the mosque he built. The tomb is only covered with sand which remains undamaged by neither strong rains nor wind,

according to folklore.

Taking a speedboat ride to Panglima Sugala courtesy of the young Tawi-Tawi Governor Nurbert M. Sahali, we came across a virgin island surrounded by white sand called **Pu' Panampangan** (Rendezvous Island). It's really a perfect island for those really private moments. We were told that this island will soon be developed complete with a small hotel to cater to tourists who troop to Tawi-Tawi for some R and R. I'd prefer it in its present state though, devoid of commercial touch.



Get it! Get it! Tawi-Tawi Information Officer Ms. Babylyn Absar seems to be telling a Bud Bongao regular resident

Bud Bongao

The highlight of my trip was of course the hike to Bud (mountain) Bongao. This mountain is considered holy. On our way up, we even saw parents with their babies who are 'offered' to Allah. Parents would pray for healing or blessing. With the presence of Basilan Provincial Manager Toots Jadjuli, some staff of Tawi-Tawi Provincial Manager Salim Yusop and an *imam*, we got ready for this thrilling journey. Before initiating our ascent to this holy mountain, we loaded up on bananas to be thrown at the regular inhabitants of the mountain – the monkeys. Yes, these bananas will be your tickets to trek the mountain. Without them, you'll have a hard time climbing, if you survive the monkey attack. So make sure you have the bananas and a wooden stick to maintain your balance during the steep trail. Oh, don't forget to bring some loose change as well.

A couple of hours later and after a series of water breaks and enough time to catch our breath, we managed to make it to the top. There we gathered inside a small tomb covered by a white cloth. After a special ritual led by the *imam*, we whispered our special wishes one by one as we offer the loose change from our pockets. That last part is really not mandatory so don't fret if you forgot to bring money.

Reaching the peak is truly euphoric. I saw a breathtaking panoramic view of Tawi-Tawi and a glimpse of Malaysia. The best part was I crossed another item from my bucketlist.

Did I mention I got my wish granted? **(MA. LINA G. REYES)**



We're on top of the world! A memorable shot at the top of Bongao Mountain



Sheik Makhdum's mysterious tomb.



Let's rendezvous @ Pu Panampangan

A Family Affair

Tawi-Tawi Acting Provincial Manager **Salim D. Yusop** proudly recalls his humble beginnings when he first joined the food agency. He was 27 years old when he joined the NFA as stock control clerk in 1976. Fresh from his stint at the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) where he was earning only P7.50 per day, his excitement to work for the NFA was reinforced by the fact that he would be getting double than what he used to earn at P15 per day.

Two years later, he would become corporate bookkeeper of the food agency. With a Bachelor of Science degree in Accountancy and a Master in Public Administration from the Mindanao State University, OIC Yusop will serve as acting accountant for another year before becoming an acting Grains Stock Control Officer from 1981 to 1983. Immediately after, he became warehouse supervisor which he held until 2004. For four years after that, he served as administrative officer. He's been an

acting provincial manager of Tawi-Tawi since 2008. "I wish I'd finally get the position before my retirement," Manager Yusop said. He is set to retire in 2015.

Manager Yusop is married to Salvacion, formerly of Camarines Sur. Asked how the two met considering they are literally oceans apart, I was told that Mrs. Yusop stayed with an uncle in Tawi-Tawi. "She went here to Tawi-Tawi to study. Little did she know she would fall in love with me," Manager Yusop joked. Their union is blessed with six children. Unfortunately, the third child died of pneumonia when she was only three years old. The eldest child graduated with a computer science degree and is now the proud owner of an internet café located inside the Yusop family compound. Two of his other children

are practicing nurses in Saudi Arabia. A son is currently taking up dentistry in Manila while the youngest child is on his third year in college taking up Hotel and Restaurant Management (HRM). "It makes me happy seeing that my children

A panoramic view of the the Tawi-Tawi Provincial Capitol.



are making their own names and I'm proud to say that my salary from the NFA helped a lot in sending them to school," Manager Yusop said.

Manager Yusop belongs to the 4th batch of the Management Training Program (MTP) having graduated in August 2010. "We were the last batch of MTP graduates," Yusop said. He was also very active with union activities, having been the President of the NFAEA Tawi-Tawi chapter for 20 years. At one time, he served as the regional chair of the employees' union for Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). Asked what more can he ask for, he said his only wish now is for him to become a full-fledged manager of NFA Tawi-

Tawi. "This will be the ultimate highlight of my career," Manager Yusop said. *(Recently, PM Yusop has been bestowed full-fledged status - ed)*

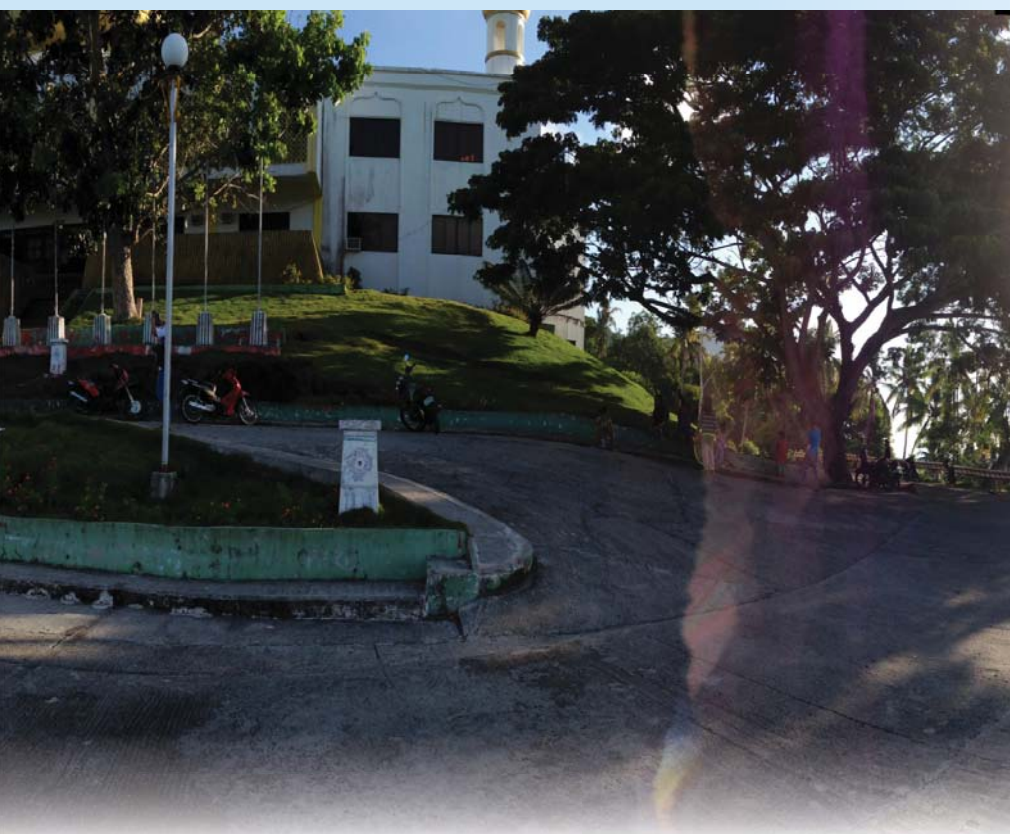
The provincial manager is supervising 15 employees under his watch with 11 island municipalities under its jurisdiction. "Para na kaming magkakapatid dito sa Tawi-Tawi. Kaya kapag may nagre-retire, nakakalungkot din. Kasi sanay na kami sa isa't-isa," Manager Yusop conveyed. When our group visited, we experienced this camaraderie Manager Yusop was talking about. We also realized just how excited they were to entertain NFA employees especially those from the Central Office.

Dubbed as the "Emerging

Southern Frontier", Tawi-Tawi Provincial Administrator Kadirie Sahali shared that the total population of Tawi-Tawi is placed at 366,000. Recently, it was taken out of the list of the Philippines' poorest provinces which makes the provincial government so happy. Mr. Sahali claimed that the province is generally peaceful, contrary to popular belief. "We are not only the country's seaweeds capital, we have also other potentials. We invite you to explore Tawi-Tawi and enjoy our unique brand of hospitality," Sahali said. Manager Yusop echoes Sahali's catchphrase and added that people should do away with run of the mill travel itineraries and try Tawi-Tawi for those exciting adventures for a change. **(LINA REYES)**



Manager Salim D. Yusop and his staff.



"Magsukul" (that's thank you) to the following who made our journey more meaningful and truly enjoyable:

Tawi-Tawi Governor Nurbert M. Sahali & the Tawi-Tawi provincial government
 Dir. Dianne Silva
 ARD Robert Hermano
 PM Toots Jadjuli
 PM Salim Yusop
 Ms. Angie Pellien
 Ms. Hanna Butucan
 Ms. Lei Arsad
 Ms. Babylyn Absar
 Sir. Alive Bakili
 Botchoy
 & everyone at the Tawi-Tawi Provincial Office



The Hidden Treasures of Quirino

By Ma. Cynthia DL. Suarez
Photos by Maning Sadsad

It took us about seven hours by land travel from Manila to reach the NFA-Quirino Provincial Office in Cabarroguis. Though quite tired, this has somehow vanished with the warm welcome of Provincial Manager Emmanuel Villanueva and his staff.

If you're used to the city life, Quirino province is the complete opposite. No high rise buildings, no malls, no traffic, no pollution, etc. but, it doesn't mean that they are way behind from development. In fact, the road networks are in place, hospitals, public markets, banks, lodging houses, sports facilities and other basic necessities are available.

When we made a courtesy call on Gov. Junnie Cua, he proudly shared the development plan of the provincial government to transform Quirino into an agro-livestock processing and distribution hub and a new-agro-industrial core in Cagayan Valley.

We enjoyed looking at the vast greenery and scenery as we traveled the steep and mountainous terrain around the province, savored the fresh air and the serenity of the place. We could also conclude that Quirinians are used to simple living.

Within a few days that we stayed in Quirino, we discovered a lot of things.

Profile

The smallest of the inland provinces in Cagayan Valley Region, Quirino is bounded by Isabela in the North and Aurora in the East. It is considered also as the youngest province in the region which was named in honor of former President Elpidio A. Quirino.

Originally, Quirino was created as a sub-province of Nueva Vizcaya under Republic Act 4734 on June 18, 1966. It became a regular province under RA

6394 on September 10, 1971.

Quirino province is heavily forested, about 80% of the total area is covered by mountains and highlands. It occupies a total land area of 305,718 hectares more or less which is approximately 11.75% of the total regional land area or 1.02% of the Philippines' Land Area. The Sierra Madre Mountain range is the major topographic feature of Quirino, providing a natural barrier on the eastern and southwestern part of the province.

Agriculture is a major industry in the province. Rice and corn are the main crops grown in the province. Around 16,084 hectares are planted to rice and 25,786 hectares to corn. Average annual production at two croppings per year is estimated at 55,675 metric tons for palay and 89,941 metric tons for corn. The Municipality of Saguday is considered as the Rice Granary of the province. Banana is also abundantly grown in the area.

NFA Office in Quirino

The NFA provincial office in Quirino is a two-storey building located along San Marcos in the Municipality of Cabarroguis. Adjacent to it are GID1 and GID2 warehouses with an effective capacity of 25,000 and 12,000 bags respectively. Also found in the compound is a Satake ricemill with an input capacity of 30 bags per hour and LSU Dryer.

There are three other warehouses in the province which are all FLGC (Farm Level Grains Center) type which also serve as buying stations during procurement season. These are the warehouses in Diffun and Saguday which have an effective capacity of 25,000 bags each and 10,000 bags in Maddela.

NFA-Quirino is manned by a total of 27 regular employees comple-

mented by 12 job order personnel.

Because of the diverse activities and operations in the province, the employees have to do multi-tasking especially during peak months of procurement. Some of them perform tasks and responsibilities higher than their current positions. Take the case of Marcelina Domingo whose position is Clerk III but is now assigned as acting Warehouse Supervisor and Information Officer. To equip them for these responsibilities, these employees underwent trainings or briefings. This shows that human resource is one of the most vital assets of the food agency.

NFA Operations

With a bountiful harvest during the main cropping season this year, Cagayan Valley or Region 2 ranks second to Central Luzon in terms of the volume of palay procured by the food agency. NFA-Quirino has greatly contributed to this accomplishment. They were able to procure 19,715 bags or 218.64% accomplishment of their 7,000 bags target. A total of 130 individual farmers and three farmer cooperatives were able to participate in the agency's Palay Procurement Program

Asst. Provincial Manager Patrio Avila said that the provincial office's high performance on procurement is attributed to the competitive palay buying price of NFA at P17.00/kg. He also added that the agency has implemented a more relaxed policy on procurement.

Complementary to their palay buying activities are the drying and milling operations. They are making use of the solar pavements in GID1, Saguday and Maddela FLGCs during good weather.

With only 20 bags/hour milled rice produced by the NFA owned rice



Fossilized flowers produced in the province.

mill, the provincial office is contracting private rice mills to complement their rice requirements not only for their rice distribution activities but also for dispersal to other provinces.

Although Quirino is a production area, they are also into distribution activities. They are servicing more than 100 accredited rice retail outlets mostly located in public markets.

Potentials of the Province

The province has a lot of potentials because it is blessed with abundant natural resources such as caves, waterfalls, mountains, forests, etc. Governor Cua hoped to bring Quirino into the tourism and industrial map of the country.

Quirino is a potential for eco-tourism. The Governor's Rapids and Caves is one of the prides of the province. It was awarded as the cleanest inland bodies of water in the region. It is best for adventure, kayaking and rafting or simply boating. Another tourist attraction is the Aglipay Caves and Campsite that are made up of a complex of 38 caves including 7 underground

chambers. There are other numerous waterfalls hidden in between these natural formations. Some of them are the Bimmapor and Maddela Falls where visitors could plunge into the crystal clear and cool waters and enjoy

eating at the picnic area at a very cheap price.

The province has substantial deposits of gold, copper, limestone, silver, iron, sulfur, coal, marble, phosphate and guano.

Quirino is also known for its cottage industries such as wood carving, furniture and fixture making, fossilized flower making and artificial flower making.

One of the producers of home-based fossilized flowers and skelitized flowers and leaves is Mrs. Lucena Aguas of Cabarroguis who uses available and locally grown leaves such as alibangbang, bo tree, corn husks, etc. She is exporting her products to Europe and supplies local stores in Manila such as National Bookstore and Balibayan Handicrafts.



Courtesy call with Gov. Junnie Cua (center)



Our first encounter was in June 1997. We were batch mates in one of the Moral Recovery Program (MRP) Transformational Leadership Training Workshops conducted by the Human Resource Management Department. We were not able to really get that close during that five-day workshop although there were a number of activities where we were group mates. My info about him was very limited. All I know is that he was the Regional Economist of Region 2.

Time has quickly passed. The next thing I know, he was the Acting Provincial Manager of NFA-Ifugao and later, of NFA-Quirino eventually where he was promoted as full fledged Provincial Manager.

I just thanked the Lord for this opportunity to visit NFA-Quirino and get the chance to know **PM Emmanuel L. Villanueva** up close and personal.

Among his peers, he is fondly called “Manny” but he remains “Boy” to his childhood friends. He was born and raised in Tuguegarao City, Cagayan. He was second and the eldest boy among his seven siblings.

Although he was his mother’s pet, he did not grow up to be a spoiled brat. Even at an early age, he learned the meaning of hard work. While in grade school, he earned his keep as a caretaker of fighting cocks after school and as a shoe shine boy during weekends not only in their town proper but in nearby barangays also. When he went to Manila to pursue his bachelor’s degree in Economics at the Central Colleges of the Philippines, he worked as a self-supporting student. He even worked as a laborer/truck helper in a rope and twine factory in Quezon City where his life was endangered.

While pursuing his bachelor’s degree, he was luckily hired at the then National Grains Authority (NGA) in 1977 at the Central Office as a casual Utilityman assigned at the Office of Deputy Administrator Pablo Pablo with a daily

PM Emmanuel Villanueva:

Up Close and Personal



PM Villanueva (in blue shirt) with Region 2 executives (L-R) PM Evelyn M. Barroga, ARD Mario M. Gonzales, OIC Lolit Paz, and PM Antonio M. Macato.

Given the chance to implement some policy changes in operations, he said that he would settle for complete decentralization in the field. He says there are opportunities lost when decisions need to be rendered at the Central Office when it could already be decided by the Regional Director or Provincial Manager.

How does he see himself five to ten years from now? He is not hypocrite to say that he is not aiming for higher position because he knows that he is also capable. Perhaps, this is one factor that motivates him to do well in his craft. He may not be the perfect BOSS but trying to meet what is expected of him.

What gives him inspiration to do better in his career is the love and support of his family. As a father, he is already well accomplished. His eldest daughter, Emmeline is a Certified Public Accountant and is now working in Asia Pacific PTY Ltd in Metro Manila while Cheska Mae, his youngest daughter is a Registered Nurse working at Callang Hospital in Isabela. His wife, Connie is an Accounts Analyst at NFA-Isabela Provincial Office. (MA. CYNTHIA DL. SUAREZ)

rate of P13.00. During his stint at ODAP, he was able to complete his college degree and was promoted twice but still on a casual status.

When NGA was reconstituted into the National Food Authority, most of the casual employees applied for a permanent position. Luckily, he passed the qualifying examinations and series of interviews, the final one with former Administrator Jesus Tanchanco. He was to be given a permanent position but to be assigned in the field.

Without hesitation, he accepted the Provincial Economist position of NFA-Allacapan in Cagayan. It was also here where one of his most unforgettable experiences in the food agency happened. He personally witnessed how a group of New People's Army armed with high caliber firearms assaulted the NFA-Allacapan compound in 1986. Fortunately, only the security guards were in the compound but fear engulfed him and the other NFA employees because the house they were renting was just across the NFA office and he saw how the NPAs attacked.

In 1995, he was promoted as Regional Economist of NFA-Region 2. As a regional staff, he also pitched in as Regional Operations Officer. His biggest break came in 2007 when he was assigned as Acting Provincial Manager of NFA-Lagawe and later in NFA-Quirino until his promotion to a full-fledged Provincial Manager.

When asked about his management style, he said that he lets his subordinates participate in decision making but gives direction on how things are to be implemented. "I'm not strict but I'm not also lenient. I commend good performance but reprimand also those who can not meet the required performance standards. I'm duty bound to correct them and one way of instilling discipline is through sanction. As the saying goes: "it takes an iron to sharpen an iron."

Most of the time, PM Manny goes out from the comfort of his air conditioned room doing rounds of the warehouses to check on problems with the operations, or attend ugnayan with various stakeholders including local officials.

Per NFA classification, Quirino was previously a class C province because it lacks the necessary processing facilities. But PM Manny was able to upgrade the provincial office into class B when he was able to facilitate the rehabilitation of the rice mill previously installed in Alfonso Lista which is now being utilized at GID warehouse in San Marcos Cabaroguis with 70 bags rice output per day for an eight-hour operation. Currently, he is also instrumental in installing the perimeter fence of our FLGC in Sagguday and Maddela utilizing used galvanized roofs when the FLGC in Sagguday was re-roofed.



PM Villanueva checks NFA rice.

Humble Beginnings

NFA is a good and rich source of story plots, be it a love story, comedy, action, drama or adventure. Name it, you have it. There are also a lot of heart warming and inspiring stories that could move you to tears.

Most of the officials and employees were fresh graduates when they started their careers in NFA and stayed until their retirement age. Most of them rose from the ranks. This was the result of their hard work, determination and perseverance.

Some of the employees even found their lifetime partners in NFA and raised their own families while working with the agency. The food agency has been the lifeblood of thousands of employees who have been part of the NFA family, even those who were no longer in the active service. This is not only in terms of financial and material things but also career-wise. NFA has been a good training ground in enhancing the employees' management and leadership skills, in building unity, harmony and friendship.

For forty years of its existence, NFA has been a dedicated partner of the employees both in their professional growth and in their family life. Most of the employees were able to send their children to school through the agency's educational loan which were available to qualified employees twice a year at no interest cost. There's also the GSIS loans, PAG-IBIG, etc. which were a big help to the employees. It was a joke that most NFA employees are from *Loandon* meaning "loan dun, loan dito". But it's true. Government employees' meager income is not sufficient to send their children to good schools thus, the need to augment it through various loan

assistance.

But these are all temporary. Many of the employees of the food agency are now well accomplished either in their career, family life or both. Their children are now professionals, working abroad or managing their own businesses and some of them have their own families. Isn't that a feather on the cap for the employees?

Take the case of our co-workers in NFA-Quirino Provincial Office who have earned their laurels through their children. But, they are not yet resting on their laurels, there are still much to contribute for the food agency. They see themselves still serving the agency until their retirement age or earlier, if there is an attractive early retirement package offer. **(MA. CYNTHIA DL. SUAREZ)**



NFA Quirino employees

Here is the list of the accomplishments of the employees' children in NFA-Quirino Provincial Office:

Name of Employee	Position	Name of Children	Educ. Attainment	Present Employment/ Position
Emmanuel L. Villanueva Wife- Consuelo	Provincial Manager Accts. Analyst-Isabela	Emmeline Cheska Mae	BSA-CPA BSN-RN	CPA-AcquirePacific PTY Ltd. Trainee Nurse- Callang Hospital
Patricio T. Avila Wife : Encarnacion	Provl. Opns. Officer Adm. Officer III	Patrick John James Roy Patricio, Jr Clonilyn	B. Behavioral Science MBA/MPA BS Philosophy BS Civil Engineering BSN-RN/MAN	Employee- Private Firm -do- Employee- Private Firm Nurse- Govt. Hospital
Charito V. Tecson Husband: Miguel	PSQAO Adm, Officer II-Isabela	Charmigne Mark Caesar	BS Med. Tech BS Philo	Fresh Student Student
Emillo B. Aggarl Wife: Leticia	WS II	Elaine Joel	BS Physical Therapy Diesel Mechanic	Abroad – Paris Businessman
Ma. Lourdes M. Alejandro Husband: Junard	Supply Officer II GOA II – Isabela	Jam Ivy Jam Mae	BS Finance Mgnt. BS Elem. Edu	Student Student
Elpidio S. Dela Cruz Wife: Zenaida	Enforcement & Inv. Officer/Actg WS II	Elpidio Gener Jr. Genesis Gene	BS-Inform. Tech BS HRM BS HRM	Private Business Student graduating Student
Gloria D. Macaraeg	Reg. Licensing Officer	Czar John mark Olive Monaglo	BS Civil Engineering BS Acct.	Employee- Private Const. Firm Employee- Private Firm
Evalyn C. Molina Husband: Pedro	Sr. Acctg. Specialist	Karen Aileen Anwar Ismhael Moamar Ritz Rajiv	BS HRM BR Mgt. BS Mgt. BS IT	Self employed Private Firm Private Firm Private Firm
Teresita S. Morales Husband: Romeo	WS II	Ma. Lourdes Ma. Imelda	BSC – Mgt. BS Acctg.	Abroad – Dubai Private Firm
Luthgardo M. Sagnip Wife: Victoria	Truck Driver	Christian Christoper Crisanto Jelon	BS IT BS Physical Therapy High Sch. Grad BS Accountancy	Abroad Abroad Private Firm Private Firm
Zenaida M. Soriano (widow)	Cashier III	Jacky Joey Jay Jerry'Zaida Elaine	BS Agro Forestry BS Accountancy Industrial Elec. BSIT BEE	BJMP Private Firm Private Firm Private Firm Self-employed
Delfin M. Manango Wife: Luz	Truck Driver	Sharon Joy Maricelle Joan Ethyl Jane	BS Physical Therapy BSN-RN BSN-RN	Private Firm Businesswoman Private Firm
Wilma A. Garingan Husband: Virgilio	Economist III	Jenny Vi Johnver Walter Wayne Junellsen	BS Computer Eng'g. BSN BS Computer Science BSCA	Public School Self-employed Self-employed Student
Marcos A. Saladino,Jr. Wife: Edith	MPS II	Precious Princess	BS Financial Mgt.	Private Firm

"There are no secrets to success; don't waste time looking for them. Success is the result of perfection, hard work, learning from failure, loyalty to those for whom you work, and persistence." ~~~ Colin Powell

By God's Grace



Grace shows one of her best shots when she joined the La Sallite Miss Attorney-at-Law in 2011.



Grace is shown as she classifies palay in the NFA warehouse in Quirino.

When I first heard of her story, I told myself, “this one is a good story material either for *Maala-ala Mo Kaya* or *Magpakailanman*.” Her story inspired me and I guess everyone who would read it, more so, if you will meet her personally.

“Hindi kasalanan na ipanganak na mahirap ang isang tao, pero isang kasalanan na manatili siyang mahirap.” Grace proved this to be true.

She was barely a day old when her biological mother left her in the care of the *hilot* and her husband who became her adoptive parents (both are now already demised). She practically did not enjoy her childhood. At a very young age, she needed to help her adoptive parents earn a living because they were not only old (early 50's) but were also poor. She would sell vegetables and other stuffs in the market and neighborhood, run errands, and do other odd jobs so she could have “baon” for her schooling. Luckily, the public elementary school where she studied was



Grace in her small abode bought out of her savings from work and business.

just a walking distance from her home. Despite her situation, she graduated valedictorian.

The situation was different when she reached high school. She had to walk six to seven kilometers to reach her school if she wasn't able to earn or save enough for her transportation fare. At times, she would not mind skipping her meal so she could just attend her classes. Unfortunately, she did not land on the honor roll when she graduated high school because of her many absences and failure to submit school projects and participate in extra curricular activities.

But, her situation in life did not discourage her. In fact, she considered them as challenges and this even made her stronger and determined to change the course of her life. She said that the biggest factor is her faith in God. She was thankful that at an early age, she was introduced to the Word of God. Her local church, The Word of Eternal Life Fellowship, was instrumental in her spiritual growth. She is an active youth leader and a member of the Praise and Worship Team. Her church mates were part of her support system. They would contribute money so she could join school contests and competitions.

With God's providence, Grace was one of the seven applicants in the whole province of Quirino who passed the qualifying examination for scholarship under the Department of Agrarian Reform. As a requirement, she had to take an Agriculture-related course. Although, she is fascinated to

become a lawyer, she had no other recourse but to take Bachelor of Science in Agriculture at the Quirino State University. She put aside her dream, what was important was to grab this opportunity. She knew that this will be her stepping stone for a brighter future.

While completing her bachelor's degree, she became an active student leader. She served as senator, vice-president and president of the Student Government. Serving in the student government gave her the privilege to get discounts from her tuition fees. She used these discounts and stipend as student assistant to sustain her school needs and expenses. She continued selling available stuff that could be turned into extra income. Beauty and brains are not enough adjectives to describe her. She is also resolute, diligent, enterprising, etc.

She finished her college degree with flying colors. She graduated Cum Laude in 2008. Her thesis, "The Effect of Different Growth Promotants on the Growth of Broilers" was adjudged as Best Thesis of the Year.

After graduation, she worked for one year at the Provincial Capitol but transferred to NFA in June 2009 when opportunity knocked. She worked as Secretary to the Regional Director in Santiago City, Isabela but on a job order status. She then moved to NFA-Quirino Provincial Office after getting a permanent position as Clerk III. Even after getting a regular position at NFA, she continued to be enterprising. She would sell *bangus*, mango and other

fruits in season to NFA offices and in their barangays. She would save the profit to buy necessary things or appliances for the house.

Gone now are the days of skipped meals and kilometric walking. Grace is now slowly coming up from the pit of poverty.

She now lives in a more comfortable house which she previously shared with her "Tatang," before he died a few months ago. The house is not yet fully finished and furnished which she bought together with a 600 sq.m lot out of her savings and her income as Clerk III from NFA and selling different stuff. She also owns a motorcycle which she uses in commuting to and from the house and in transporting her goods. She has invested on some appliances to make her life easier.

And her biggest investment nowadays is her education. She is pursuing her childhood dream of becoming a lawyer. She is now in her 4th year of Law at the University of La Sallete in Santiago, Isabela. In 2011, she even won as Miss Attorney-at-Law.

She's also doing multi-tasks at NFA-Quirino. She acts as Classifier especially during procurement season (because of her background as agriculturist) and Enforcement and Investigation Officer (because of her background as law student).

It may still be a long way to go before Grace finally realizes all her dreams but she believes that there is nothing impossible with God. (MA. CYNTHIA L. SUAREZ)



Photos by Maning Sadsad

If Dir. Danny Pastrana had the power to delay time, he would probably do it. Years from now, he would still be doing his daily routine at the NFA. For just the mere thought that after July 21, he will no longer be reporting for work, gives him a feeling of sadness. Who would not be? NFA has been Dir. Pastrana's second home and family for the last 41 years. This is where his best was tested and the worst in his life has been surpassed. Such intense dedication to the agency that given the chance to start all over again, he will still work at NFA.

Looking back, he recalls that he practically started from scratch. He worked as a security guard while finishing his bachelor's degree. But accident struck him. While on duty, he was stabbed by his co- security guard. He was operated twice and was fortunate to survive. He had no ill-feelings for his attacker, but the latter must face the consequence of his action. With P130 in his pocket borrowed from a neighbor, he went to Manila to find a new job. Luckily, he was hired as an emergency laborer with an P8/ day salary at the defunct Rice and Corn Administration (RCA).

When National Grains Authority (NGA) was created, he was fortunate to pass the examination administered by the National Computer Center and was given a Registration and Licensing Processor position at the newly established sub-office in Ifugao. It was during his assignment in Ifugao where he was promoted full-fledged Provincial Manager and his leadership was tested. Despite a landslide that occurred in the area, supply and price of rice were stabilized prompting the local government to give him commendation.

His career at NFA was not without ups and downs. He was already in acting capacity as Assistant Regional Director for two years when his promotion was by-passed and had to revert back to his Provincial Manager position. But, as the saying goes "you can not put a good man

Dir. Danilo Pastrana: Savoring the Fruits of Hardwork



Dir. Pastrana shows to PM Villanueva and Director Estoperez the fruit-bearing trees at his farm in Quirino.

down.” After a few months, his much awaited promotion as Assistant Regional Manager came. The same story line was repeated. He was already in acting capacity as Regional Manager of Region 11 for almost two years but was reverted back to his Asst. Regional Manager position. One day prior to his 55th birthday, he received the good news, his promotion as a full-fledged Regional Manager. He also experienced being charged by the Ombudsman because of his participation in the bidding but this was later dismissed due to lack of sufficient evidence.

Among his field assignments, he considered Region 11 as his best because it was during his stint there

where the region received several awards in various competitions. Region 5 came as his second best, but he considered every field assignment special because of the many learning experiences he gained, the memories and the friendship he earned from the people he worked with which he valued as his own family. He said he has a list of birthdays of his staff and employees and this he intends to bring even when he is already out of the agency, so he could personally greet them if not with flowers (for the ladies), it could be a simple text message which he usually does to make them feel that he is just around.

What does he intend to do after retirement? Go back to farming.

While at NFA, he was able to invest in a farm lot in Quirino and Nueva Ecija. But because of his various field assignments, he wasn't able to attend to them personally. His farm in Quirino is planted with almost all kinds of fruit bearing trees but this is being taken care of by his son-in-law. Now that he will be free from government service, this would probably take much of his time. He can now have the luxury of time to tend to his farming activities. His “apostolic” mission to his three grandchildren will also be a priority on his list. But most of his time will be spent with his wife, Isabel while, savoring the fruits of his labor. **(MA. CYNTHIA L. SUAREZ)**



Director Pastrana (4th from left) with Region 2 executives.



A loving mother with a generous heart. That's the kind of impression Dr. Amelia Tejada will likely leave to anyone she's meeting for the first time. Spend more time with her and you'll realize you have your first impressions correct.

Set to retire this year, Dr. Tejada, who is the Executive Director of the Food Development Center (FDC), just recently received what could be considered the main highlight to her career. She is this year's recipient of the 2013 Outstanding Science Administrator Award (Dioscoro L. Umali Medal) from the National Academy of Science and Technology-Department of Science and Technology (NAST-DOST) besting other wannabes from across the country. With the award, Dr. Tejada gets to receive a Dioscoro L. Umali Medal, plaque and a cash prize of P150,000.

Asked what she will do with her cash prize, Dr. Tejada shares in jest that she will pay off her debt with the money. The FDC Executive Director received the award formally during the opening ceremonies of the National Science and Technology Week celebration at the SMX Convention Center, SM Mall of Asia in Pasay City last July 23 with no less than His Excellency President Benigno Aquino III gracing the event.

With a Bachelor's Degree in Agricultural Chemistry from UP Los Baños, Dr. Tejada or Mel to her close friends and associates, used to head the Pesticide Chemistry and Toxicology Laboratory, National Crop Protection Center of UPLAB when she was Associate Professor of the state university in Laguna from 1995 to 1999. For 30 years, Dr. Tejada's career involved years of remarkable research or studies on various subjects which won for her prestigious awards in the field of science and technology. To her credit, Dr. Tejada's work "Acceptability Study of Iron Fortified Rice" earned the AFMA and R&D Gold Award from the Department of Agriculture.

Dr. Amelia Tejada: 2013 Outstanding Science Administrator awardee

By Ma. Lina G. Reyes



Dr. Tejada doing what she does best at the FDC laboratory.

the brand of discipline they exude, their work ethics, and their attitude. "I wish that they continue doing this to keep the brilliant image of FDC," Dr. Tejada said. The director also hopes that FDC employees will maintain their harmonious relationship especially as they set their eyes on the coveted ISO 9001: 2008 Quality Management System, which is an ISO/IEC 17025 requirement

for testing laboratories.

Dr. Tejada's tenure in government service was supposed to conclude on her 65th birthday last July 3 but she was given a six-month extension until December 2013 by the Civil Service Commission. She says she will spend these months to take care of unfinished business at the FDC. Among these, she reveals, are the issues on rice such as cadmium, lead and arsenic in China. "We need to look into these issues more closely and hopefully find the right solution to these concerns eventually," Dr. Tejada said.

Not to be outdone, the NFA PRAISE Committee, headed by Assistant Administrator Celia Z. Tan, awarded Dr. Tejada the NFA Achiever's Award, the highest award given to an NFA

employee. During a testimonial for Dr. Tejada in Quezon City, Administrator Orlan Calayag said that the NFA is proud of Dr. Tejada's achievement. "You can be considered the 'crown jewel' of the NFA. I am happy to share that I never heard anyone tell me any bad word against you. Everything is about how good you are, how great you are with what you do. I hope that you will continue to inspire us," Calayag said.

Deputy Administrator Ludovico Jarina said that Dr. Tejada is very simple yet a high achiever. Deputy Jarina temporarily took over the directorship of the FDC when Dr. Alicia O. Lustre retired from the service in 2009. He said he was glad that Dr. Tejada took the challenge because he can't think of anyone fit for the job. "I'm pleased that we got the best person to head the FDC and she has proven how worthy she is for the job," Jarina said.

When asked what she will miss when she leaves the food agency in December, Dr. Tejada confesses she will miss driving from Los Baños to the office every day. But says she will miss her officemates big time. "I am happy for the opportunity to meet wonderful people at FDC and I will always be grateful for the chance to work with them," Dr. Tejada said.

The FDC Director also admits she will be taking care of her seven grandchildren when she retires. "I will also keep myself busy with consultancy in research firms. It's difficult to throw away something you've been doing for years and continue to enjoy and love doing to this day," Dr. Tejada discloses.

Honorable people are always remembered for their integrity, honesty, decency. These are values which molded Dr. Mel Tejada. Values she has handed down to her children and her children's children. Values that earned her countless awards and accolades. To Dr. Tejada, thank you for being the source of pride of your NFA family.

She deserves it, is how her staff at the FDC reacts of her bagging the coveted science achievement. Ms. Belinda Santos, Support Services division chief, said that Dr. Tejada is like a mother to every FDC employee. "She's very simple and down to earth. Most of the time, she treats us more like friends than colleagues," Santos said.

The first time Dr. Tejada set foot at FDC, she admits she was amazed by the discipline that reverberates around the office. "Coming from UP Los Baños where trees were all around, I wanted to decorate my office with plants but I was told, albeit politely, that I just can't. Mosquitoes breed on plants which may contaminate our laboratory samples," Dr. Tejada shares joyously.

Engr. Charles Alingod said that the FDC family is proud of the Director's recent achievement. "In behalf of the FDC employees, we wish to congratulate Dr. Tejada for this award. This will also bring honor to the FDC as an organization," Alingod said.

For her part, Dr. Tejada imparts that she is proud of the FDC employees, for



Conference Output for the 2nd NFAEA National Board Conference

National officers of the NFAEA from Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao gathered in Cavinti, Laguna for the 2nd NFAEA National Board Conference from August 12 to 16, 2013.

On the first day of the conference, union leaders were grouped in five to tackle different issues. The groups are Tropang Matibay, Tropang Kapatiran, Tropang Aksyon, Tropang Talino, and Tropang Integridad.

The following are the accomplishments of the second NFAEA National Board Conference:

1. Responsive NFAEA HELP Program providing P300,000 as seed money for the program with P5000 cash advance
2. Status of the 2010 NFA GAIP investigation
3. Additional P7000 Anniversary Bonus
4. NFA Provident Fund issue (Recall of Special Order and individual certificate of employees and NFA share)
5. Status of NFA Housing Program
6. Resolution on the decentralization on the purchase of uniform allowance of NFA employees
7. Rice allowance for the incumbent employees
8. Amendments to the Merit Selection Plan
9. Status on the investigation of the 42 alleged anomalous appointments
10. Training needs analysis/assessment
11. Comparison of Uniform Rules on Administrative Cases in the Civil Service (URACCS) and (Revised Rules on Administrative Cases in Civil Service (RRACCS)
12. Requesting CSC on the modification of the Strategic Performance Management System (SPMS) provision on forced ranking
13. Resolution opposing the transfer of the FDC to the Department of Agriculture
14. Implementation of benefits from the Magna Carta for science and technology personnel in all NFA field offices (RSQAO, PSQAO, QAO, Pest Control Officers, Calibrators, Mechanical Plant Operators and Engineers)

NFAEA offers Responsive HELP

The NFAEA is coming out with a more responsive Hospitalization Lend-a-Hand Program (HELP) to provide immediate cash to union members for payment of medicines and other related expenses.

Approved by the National Board officers during the 2nd NFAEA National Board Conference in Cavinti, Laguna, the Responsive HELP (RH) program will give union members who are about to be hospitalized the option to advance at least P5,000 from the association to be liquidated within 45 days upon release from the hospital or clinic.

To avail of the cash advance, the concerned union member must submit a certified true copy of the hospital admission slip, a deposit slip or initial hospital/clinic billing.

The other feature of this responsive HELP is the quick full payment of the HELP claim upon submission of the complete documentary requirements to the NFAEA. Among these documents include hospital billing, Philhealth and GHIP vouchers, official receipts for procured medicines with corresponding doctor's prescription, laboratory fees, and other medical services.



Members of the NFAEA National Board pose for a photo during a break in continuing discussions during the 2nd NFAEA National Board Conference in Cavinti.



Participants to the teambuilding seminar-workshop strike a pose with Deputy Administrator Pedro S. Hernando, Jr. and HRM Director Ruben Reside.

Training the next Teambuilding Facilitators

By Allan Tambunting

The NFA top management recognizes the importance of teamwork in effective people management. Hence, the HRMD conducted the Team Building Facilitators Seminar-Workshop last April 4 to 5 at the NFA Training Center in Visayas Avenue, Quezon City.

NCR's Central District Office Provincial Manager Lemuel Pagayunan, a well-known team building facilitator and a university professor, was the lecturer during the seminar-workshop. He emphasized the need for teamwork and for the team to work together to achieve the agency's goals.

The employees who participated in the seminar were tapped to facilitate the structured team building activities of various Central Office departments and offices.

The main objective of the structured team building activities is to increase overall organizational effectiveness by improving the quality of existing working relationships, intensifying team building and creating common awareness of the organization and direction.



HRM personnel during their teambuilding held at the HRMD office.

Highest palay... from page 5

(CARAGA), the NFA bought 82,582 bags or 247 percent more than the 33,400 bags procurement target for the period. In Region 12 (Central Mindanao), the NFA bought a total of 186,920 bags or 179 percent more than the target of 108,000 bags.

Calayag said this is a good indication that the country is on its way to rice self-sufficiency. NFA's high procurement records these past four months support the agriculture department's Food Staples Self-Sufficiency Program (FSSP) which aims to make the country

self-sufficient not only in rice but also other food staples.

The government has been veering away from too much rice importation, cutting down the NFA's rice import volumes over the past three years. This year, the agency is importing a total of 187,000 metric tons, a supply good for six days, to augment the NFA's buffer stock for the lean months of July to September.

With the continuing good harvest, and barring any unforeseen calamities that might impact on the projected harvest for the year, we may already achieve a zero importation in 2014, Calayag said.

Time to dig the ancient *baul* and bring out those old photographs and repost them here. We've found some old photos back when *Instagram*, *facebook* and *twitter* were just figments of the imagination and we're running a series of them with you from hereon. Enjoy our first serving!

Spot the difference: Region III Director Boy de Guzman keeps his winsome smile.



ganito kami noon...
ganito na kami ngayon...



What 5 years can do: HRM ladies Leng Reyes, Janet Tuazon and Abby Pila in 2008 and how they look today.

Treasury Division Chief Ms. Marge Umali and her staff (L-R) Dexter Mendoza, Karen Mabulac, Zeny Aro, Helen Viloria, and Victor Panganiban.



Let's duet: Ms. Grace Dungo of Budget, Treasury and Fund Management Department (BTFMD) and Ferdie Javier of the General Services Department (GSD) sing together once more for this special issue.



Friends forever: Ms. Penny Ycasas from the office of Assistant Administrator Celia Tan and Ms. Rufina Yao of BTFMD.

gallery

PHOTO BY: REX ESTOPEREZ

Kaparis ng Kawayan, Kaparis ng Kalabaw

Ang Pilipino ay kaparis ng kalabaw,
napakahaba ng pasensiya, napakahaba;
kung hinahagupit walang imik,
kaya hindi pinapatay, hindi pinapatay.
Di tulad ng baboy-damo,
ayaw sumuko, ayaw patalo,
kaya siya pinapatay, pinapatay.

Jose F. Lacaba

