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FEATURES

Dairy biz in the 'New Normal'

By Lilian Villamor,
Ma. Cecilia Irang, and
Marivic Orge

As the Coronavirus took the world by surprise, businesses grapple with the economic disruptions brought about by the pandemic. Many establishments were pushed to the losing end until shutdown became imminent due to unprecedented losses. In the face of a crisis like

To page 20

DepEd, DA-PCC prep for tie-up program on school-based milk feeding

By Ma. Cecilia Irang

A total of 446,628 undernourished children are expected to benefit from the implementation of a nationwide School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP) pursuant to Republic Act No. 11037 also known as the "Masustansyang Pagkain para sa Batang Pilipino Act".

In June 2018, President Rodrigo

Duterte signed RA No. 11037 to address the problem of undernutrition among Filipino children through a National Feeding Program of which one of the components is the Milk Feeding Program with fresh milk or fresh milk-based product as additional component to cycle-menu hot meals

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Editor's Word



It has been six months since COVID-19 created fear, chaos, and uncertainties worldwide. But many have since adjusted or adopted to what is called the New Normal.

The DA-PCC, as an organization and institution, has continued implementing novel projects and activities in support of the government's thrust to reinvigorate delivery of basic services to the public, as presented in this issue of Bubalus. These efforts are complemented by new partners that emerged in the middle of the pandemic.

Take for example the private distributors and online resellers of buffalo dairy products being processed at a central milk processing facility in Nueva Ecija. Together, they helped not only in the selling and distribution of the said products within and outside the province but more importantly in promoting their health benefits.

Recently, the DA-PCC has also partnered with the DA-Philippine Coconut Authority in implementing the Coconut-Carabao Development Project in select sites all over the country. This project complements the Carabao-Based Business Improvement Network project, which was launched last year and is now in full swing in various provinces. We have featured here relevant stories in South Cotabato, Misamis Oriental, and Pangasinan.

Partnership with the Department of Education-led School-Based Milk Feeding Program has also started in Pangasinan and La Union. Continuous collaboration of DA-PCC with San Miguel Foundation also led to the latter's recent donation of 1,800 kg of flour to Catalanacan Multipurpose Cooperative in Nueva Ecija to help jumpstart its production of Milkybun, a new product born out of the need to process excess milk during the height of the pandemic. Other carabao-based enterprise-related stories in Bohol, Cagayan de Oro, and La Union are featured here.

It goes without saying that despite the pandemic, the DA-PCC has remained focused on its mission to spur entrepreneurship and livelihood opportunities for the rural populace and the general public. Thanks to the unwavering commitment and support of its various partners and collaborators.


Dr. Eric P. Palacpac

About the cover

The economic impact brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic affected many establishments. However, though the circumstance forced entrepreneurs to close their business, the pandemic also unlocked new opportunities for them. Among those were online selling of nutritious and healthy delights from carabaos milk, which not only provided income to sellers but also boosted the immunity of the consuming public against the virus.

(Photo by Chrissalyn Marcelo)



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DA-PCC, DA-PCA partner for integrated farming project

By Charlene Joanino



Coconut farmers can have additional income under a farming system integrated with dairying. This has recently been made possible following the signing of a memorandum of agreement (MOA) between the Department of Agriculture-Philippine Carabao Center (DA-PCC) and the DA-Philippine Coconut Authority (DA-PCA) on the Coconut-Carabao Development Project (CCDP).

Held last September 12 at the Milka Krem outlet in the University of the Philippines - Los Baños in Laguna and broadcast online, the MOA signing was spearheaded by Dr. Arnel Del Barrio, DA-PCC executive director, and Roel Rosales, DA-PCA deputy administrator for its operations branch.

"The CCDP aims to augment the income of coconut farmers

through the carabao-based enterprise," Paul Andrew Texon, DA-PCC focal person for the project, said.

According to Texon, said agreement will run for two years covering 17 project sites nationwide.

Under the CCDP, the DA-PCC will implement initiatives with the assistance of DA-PCA. Such interventions include entrustment of animals, establishment of processing facilities through provision of equipment or supplies, establishment of market outlets, capacitation of value chain players, coordination with stakeholders, and monitoring and evaluation.

Initially, the identified farmers shall allocate sufficient land for the construction of animal housing

and establishment of forage area. Meanwhile, the cooperative conduits are expected to utilize resources that can help usher development along the carabao enterprise value chain.

Institutionally, both DA-PCC and DA-PCA will be working with select municipal or provincial local government units for the provision of technical support services, monitoring, and allotment of space for marketing facilities.

The milk produced out of the CCDP is seen to contribute to the supply of milk required to implement RA 11037 or the "Masustansyang Pagkain para sa Batang Pilipino Program", which rallies the National Feeding Program for undernourished Filipino children.

Newly inaugurated Milkybun Prod'n Center opens biz opportunities for dairy farmers

By Dizschel Ann Salvador



(2nd from left) DA-PCC Executive Director Dr. Arnel Del Barrio and officials from the Department of Agrarian Reform lead the ribbon cutting ceremony for the newly inaugurated Milkybun Production Center.

The Department of Agriculture-Philippine Carabao Center (DA-PCC) together with the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) and Catalanacan Multipurpose Cooperative (CAMPC) officially inaugurated the Milkybun Production Center and signed the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for the Milkybun Project at the DA-PCC National Headquarters and Gene Pool, Science City of Muñoz, Nueva Ecija on September 16.

Led by DAR Secretary Atty. John Castriciones, DA-PCC Executive Director Dr. Arnel del Barrio, and CAMPC Chairman Ferdinand Cueva, the inauguration started

with site visits to CAMPC office in Catalanacan and Dairy Box in the Science City of Muñoz, Nueva Ecija. It was done in compliance with safety protocols concerning COVID-19.

Counterparting in the project are DA-PCC for the processing (raw materials), baking utensils and supplies, marketing support, and trainings; DAR for the machineries and equipment; CAMPC for the processing and labor; and San Miguel Foundation Inc. for free sacks of flour.

After the inauguration and carabao-based products tasting, a MOA

signing was held at the DA-PCC's headquarters. The program was hosted by Provincial Agrarian Reform Officer I Jocelyn Ramones.

"The real heroes of this country especially in this time of pandemic are our small farmers," DAR Secretary Castriciones said in his speech, as he recognized and showed appreciation for the farmers present in the event.

Undersecretary for Livestock William Medrano and Cabinet Secretary Karlo Nograles also joined via Zoom and delivered their messages for the event.

Also present were DAR Undersecretary Atty. Emily Padilla, Undersecretary Virginia Orogo, Undersecretary Atty. Lucius Junjun Malsi, Assistant Secretary Atty. Milagros Isabel Cristobal, DAR Region III Director Atty. Celestine Tam, PARPO II Engr. Romeo Cordero, Science City of Muñoz Mayor Nestor Alvarez PhD, representatives of Guimba Mayor Jose Dizon, PhD, Hon. NE Governor Aurelio Umali, DA-PCC employees, CAMPC members, and farmers who are receivers of EP/CLOA from DAR.

The newly inaugurated processing center, which is under the management of CAMPC, will be used for the mass production of Milkybun. It will also be an avenue for the processing of farmers' milk produce, training facility for aspiring carapreneurs, and additional source of income for the co-op, among others.

SMF donates bags of flour to CAMPC for Milkybun prod'n

By Dizschel Ann Salvador



DA-PCC Executive Director Dr. Arnel Del Barrio and SMF Program Assistant Clara Cabrera show some of the bags of flour which the SMF donated to the Catalanacan Multi-Purpose Cooperative last August 19.

The Catalanacan Multi-Purpose Cooperative (CAMPC), one of the assisted dairy cooperatives of the Department of Agriculture-Philippine Carabao Center (DA-PCC), received 72 bags (25 kg each) of free flour from the San Miguel Foundation (SMF) for the production of Milkybun.

Said initiative will ensure reduced cost for the Milkybun production, which will lead to higher income for dairy farmers.

This is not the first collaboration of DA-PCC with SMF. Last May, the latter bought fresh carabao's milk from farmer-cooperatives struggling to cope with the pandemic, which was then donated to poor communities and food banks in and around Metro Manila and neighboring provinces.

"This turnover ceremony is just the tip of the iceberg," said DA-PCC Executive Director Dr. Arnel Del Barrio as DA-PCC is set to formally launch the Milkybun Production Center by September.

Said project is in line with the "Bayanihan to Heal as One Act" (RA

11469) and the DA's "Ahon Lahat, Pagkaing Sapat (ALPAS) Kontra sa COVID-19".

The DA-PCC through its Research and Development Division (RDD) developed the Milkybun, a nutrient-rich bread made with fresh carabao's milk, to help boost the immune system of the vulnerable sector especially children because the amount of protein and carbohydrates in one glass of milk is equivalent to one Milkybun.

Meanwhile, 72 bags of flour were also given to Bohol Dairy Cooperative for the same purpose.

Also present during the ceremony were Provincial Agrarian Reform Program Officer Joyce Ramones, Chief Agrarian Reform Program Officer Borromeo Pascual, DA-PCC Deputy Executive Director Dr. Caro Salces, RDD Officer-in-Charge Dr. Eufrocina Atabay, Project Evaluation Officer Dr. Ericson dela Cruz, and RDD-CEDS Head Mina Abella, CAMPC Chairman Ferdinand Cueva and General Manager Leoncio Callo. Select staff members of DA-PCC, Department of Agrarian Reform, and CAMPC also graced the program.

The free bags of flour donated by SMF, through its Program Assistant Clara Cabrera, is in response to DA-PCC's initiative of collaborating with the private sectors to make food available and affordable while ensuring continuous livelihood opportunities for carapreneurs in communities affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

BSNMPC receives milk processing equipment under ALAB Karbawan Project



By Jan Rose Maon

The Bantog Samahang Nayon Multipurpose Cooperative (BSNMPC) received milk processing equipment from the DA-PCC under the project titled Carabao-Based Business Improvement Network (CBIN), popularized as “Accelerating Livelihood Assets Buildup (ALAB)-Karbawan” last September 9 in Asingan, Pangasinan.

Said project was funded by the office of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Food Chairperson Cynthia Villar.

The entrustment of milk processing

equipment to BSNMPC, the conduit co-op of DA-PCC for this project, is one of the CBIN’s initiatives.

Included in the milk production and processing equipment and materials entrusted are eight chest freezers, 150 ice boxes, three vehicles for transporting milk, three display chillers, 250,000 milk sachets, stickers for labels and kitchen utensils.

Said ceremonial entrustment ensures that dairy farmers are soon to have a steady stream of income from their dairy venture while

giving milk consumers an assurance that the products produced by the co-op and sold in the Dairy Box outlet are of high quality.

“We hope this program will encourage more farmers to consider dairying as a business opportunity. We aim to help our communities rise above mere subsistence and eventually boost the local dairy industry in the region,” Vilma Gagni, officer-in-charge of DA-PCC at DMMMSU, said.



ALAB-Karbawan project makes headway in SoCot

By Rodolfo Jr. Valdez

Focused on alleviating malnutrition among indigenous people in Upper Valley, South Cotabato, the DA-Philippine Carabao Center at University of Southern Mindanao (DA-PCC at USM) launched recently the Carabao-Based Business Improvement Network (CBIN) project popularized as Accelerating Livelihood and Assets Buildup (ALAB) Karbawan in Lake Sebu, South Cotabato.

The Highland Agricultural Credit Cooperative (HACC) is the participating conduit cooperative.

Initially, 18 animals from a total commitment of 50 head female crossbred buffaloes were entrusted to the conduit co-op as component of the project.

"We make sure that our dairy projects like ALAB-Karbawan are inclusive and accessible to all sectors

especially the marginalized such as indigenous people. It is quite challenging for HACC to develop and sustain a dairy value chain but with the support of our partners and the local and provincial governments, we can help them achieve a 'masaganang ani at mataas na kita' as espoused by the Department of Agriculture," Benjamin John Basilio, DA-PCC at USM center director, said.

Regional executive director of DA-RFO-XII Arlan Mangelen reiterated the all-out support of the regional office to the project beneficiaries. Mangelen recognized in his message the important role of dairy farmers in contributing to national food security.

In addition, DA-RFO-XII "Task Force Gatas" Ret. Col. Celestino Desamito challenged the HACC to boost their capacity in dairying in order to

address malnutrition and develop a dairy hub in Upper Valley.

"We are ready to take on all the challenges that are coming our way. Dairying is new to us but with the able guidance of DA-PCC, we are looking forward to a flourishing local dairy industry in Lake Sebu," Merlinda Go, HACC chairperson, said.

Prior to the entrustment of dairy animals, HACC members have undergone social preparation and technical training on buffalo production and management to help them develop strong commitment to the project and to provide them with knowledge and skills on dairy production systems. Soon, members of the co-op are expected to serve as effective disseminators of technologies on improved management practices to fellow farmers.



Billionaire co-op in Mindanao inks partnership with DA-PCC for ALAB Karbawan project

By Jeson Candole

The Department of Agriculture-Philippine Carabao Center at Central Mindanao University (DA-PCC at CMU) formally signs agreement with Oro Integrated Cooperative (OIC) in Cagayan de Oro City as the agency's conduit cooperative for the ALAB Karbawan Project.

DA-PCC at CMU Center Director Dr. Lowell Paraguas, Chairperson of the OIC Board of Directors (BOD) Doris Calapiz and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of OIC Floriano Hilot signed a Memorandum of Understanding on July 31.

ALAB Karbawan stands for Accelerating Livelihood and Assets Buildup while "Karbawan" is a Visayas and Mindanao term meaning buffalo production and management.

The project aims to establish a robust Carabao-Based Business Improvement Network (CBIN) in 16 provinces for 2019 and 11 for 2020 in the Philippines through the sponsorship of Senate Committee on

Agriculture and Food Chairperson Senator Cynthia Villar. A budget of Php10 million is allocated for each of the provinces.

Under the DA-PCC at CMU's ALAB Karbawan, one project site was identified in Misamis Oriental for 2019 with Governor Yevgeny Vicente Emano as the focal person and two in Bukidnon for 2020 with 1st District Representative Maria Lourdes Acosta-Alba and 4th District Representative Rogelio Neil Roque as the focal persons.

According to Dr. Paraguas, the DA-PCC at CMU will lead the conduct of learning events for farmers and carapreneurs that are set to make them more competitive in dairying and thus will generally improve the state of the local dairy industry in the region.

"Hopefully, through meaningful collaborations and strong partnerships, this project will pan out," Dr. Paraguas said.

Dr. Paraguas emphasized the agency and co-op will closely cooperate with local government units and other partners to ensure that the assets will be used to improve the livelihood of value chain players through herd build up, milk collection, processing and marketing of locally-produced milk products.

"It's a blessing for us to engage in this project with the DA-PCC. We are looking forward to opportunities that will benefit our farmers such as this project, which is very much aligned with the mission of changing the lives of our members and communities," Hilot said.

Meanwhile, Calapiz anticipates a significant increase in the income of their members and that soon nutritious, fresh and affordable carabao-based dairy products will be available to more consumers.

Also present during the signing were the OIC's branch managers and key staff of DA-PCC at CMU.

SoCot carapreneurs eye promising biz in new dairy hub

By Rodolfo Jr. Valdez



DA-PCC at USM Center Director Benjamin John Basilio leads the groundbreaking ceremony for the new dairy hub in South Cotabato.

Dairy buffalo farmers in South Cotabato prepare for exciting opportunities in dairying with an assured market for their milk produce following the establishment of a marketing outlet in Surallah, South Cotabato.

During a groundbreaking ceremony held last July 8, Department of Agriculture-Philippine Carabao Center at University of Southern Mindanao (DA-PCC at USM) Center Director Benjamin John Basilio emphasized the importance

of the dairy hub as a venue to promote quality milk products in Region XII.

Said hub is the first-ever processing hub for buffalo's milk in the region.

"We are expecting an increase in the demand for buffalo's milk products following this milestone," Loida Estañol, a dairy farmer and member of Canahay Dairy Farmers Association, said.

Underscoring the DA's slogan "Masaganang Ani at Mataas na

Kita", Department of Agriculture Region XII Director Arlan Mangelen expressed his staunch support to the project to help achieve the goal to produce more milk in the region and alleviate farmers from mere subsistence.

The construction of the Php3.6-million dairy hub is part of the Php10 million budget of the Carabao-Based Business Improvement Network (CBIN) project for South Cotabato, as initiated by the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Food.

"With the establishment of this hub, we are gradually completing the carabao value-chain in South Cotabato. Buffalo's milk for processing will be coming from the produce of carapreneurs from Banga, Lake Sebu, Sto. Niño, Surallah, T'boli and neighboring towns in South Cotabato".

Director Benjamin John Basilio
DA-PCC at USM Center Director



Bohol Dairy opens new outlet

By Leinefe Aton

Despite the unprecedented effect of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Bohol Dairy Cooperative (BODACO) still managed to open its newest outlet at San Pascual, Ubay, Bohol last June.

In the launching activity, Ptr. Roger Damalerio, chairman of BODACO, said this initiative aims to make the products available and accessible to a larger community especially now that people are encouraged to minimize travels to avoid contracting the virus.

San Pascual Barangay Captain Renato Abasida Jr. expressed his gratitude to the cooperative for providing his constituents easy access to nutritious and affordable

dairy products. He said he is happy to support the co-op in whatever way he can.

Guillerma Abay-abay, Carabao-Based Enterprise Development (CBED) program coordinator of the Department of Agriculture-Philippine Carabao Center at Ubay Stock Farm (DA-PCC at USF), led the ceremonial milk toast during the event.

"The ceremonial milk toast symbolizes our commitment to support BODACO's cause by helping ensure its success knowing that the outlet brings opportunities for our dairy farmers", Abay-abay quoted.

Always happy to share her backstory as a dairy farmer, Marilou Rojo, vice chairperson of BODACO, narrated how carabao dairying has saved her family from barely scraping by.

Her measure of success, she said, is that she was able to pay for her children's schooling with what she was earning from dairying. In fact, five of them have already finished college education.

The opening ceremonies also included promotional activities for Bohol Dairy's soft ice cream, given for free to the first 100 customers, and DA-PCC's newest product "Milkybun".

DA-PCC intensifies herd build up in Central Visayas

By Leinefe Aton



DA-PCC at USF entrusts dairy buffaloes to Bohol Dairy Cooperative (BODACO) under its Dairy Buffalo Dispersal Program through the cooperative conduit scheme.

As part of its strategy to increase local milk production, the Department of Agriculture- Philippine Carabao Center at Ubay Stock Farm (DA-PCC at USF), completed the distribution of additional 60 dairy buffaloes to Boholano recipients last August 1.

The Php3 million-worth project is under the Dairy Buffalo Dispersal Program through the cooperative conduit scheme of DA-PCC.

As stipulated in the memorandum of agreement (MOA), DA-PCC at USF will entrust dairy animals to Bohol Dairy Cooperative (BODACO) as the conduit co-op.

"Aside from BODACO, we have also partnered with our existing assisted cooperatives in Cebu such as the Lamac Multipurpose Cooperative (LMPC), Compostela Market Vendors Cooperative (COMAVEMCO) and the First Consolidated Cooperative along Tañon Road (FCCT) for this particular program," Guillerma Abay-abay, Carabao-based Enterprise Development (CBED) program coordinator of DA-PCC at USF, said.

To date, the center awarded a total of 169 head of dairy buffaloes since it

started in September 2019; 94 were channeled through BODACO, 43 for LMPC, 15 for COMAVEMCO and 17 for FCCT.

"This system aims to help the cooperative build up its assets initially with dairy animals as business stimuli. Upon signing of the agreement, the ownership of the buffaloes is transferred by the PCC to the co-op," Abay-abay said.

"Si co-op magbayad ni PCC og usa ka baye nga nati, while the farmer magbayad sa coop og duha ka nati. (The co-op will pay one female calf to PCC, while the farmer will pay two calves to the conduit cooperative)," Abay-abay explained.

To sustain the implementation of the program in the community, the co-op has to ensure compliance to the agreed repayment for each dispersed female buffalo. The age of the replacement animal should be 18 months old and shall be reloaned by the cooperative to another qualified farmer-trustee who is an active member of the co-op with good standing.

The succeeding calves of the

entrusted buffalo, whether male or female, shall be shared between the cooperative and the farmer-trustee on their agreed scheme.

In one of the meetings, Dr. Gundolino Bajenting, officer-in-charge of DA-PCC at USF mentioned that herd build up is one of the strategies to produce more milk in response to the national tall order to increase production from one to 10 percent.

Abay-abay additionally said the increase in the number of dairy buffaloes per household conversely provides a more satisfying income for a typical family.

To date, the center recorded a total of 3,928.85 li of milk produced out of the animals dispersed since last year under the conduit scheme. This volume comprises 5.33% of the total milk production by the center for the year. This translates to an additional income of Php192,442.50 at Php50.00 per liter of milk.

Dr. Bajenting said 40 head of dairy buffaloes are due for dispersal to farmers once the necessary government procurement documents are completed.

CDO farmers engage in carabao farming

By Jeson Candole

More than 50 select farmers and their families in Malasag, F.S. Catanico, and Cugman, Cagayan de Oro City, will soon benefit from the Carabao Development Program (CDP) under a Php2 million-worth project that will help usher carabao-based enterprise development (CBED) in said communities.

This project was initiated through an orientation activity on the components of the CDP and CBED, particularly on draft animal management, last July 2.

The Department of Agriculture-Philippine Carabao Center at Central Mindanao University (DA-PCC at CMU) partners with the Oro Integrated Cooperative (OIC) as the conduit cooperative.

Killian Deveza, business development

officer of OIC, gave the farmer-beneficiaries a heads-up on how they can fulfill all the requirements before the animals can be released to them.

"As members of the cooperative, our farmers will be prepared to take on the project and prosper in this new endeavor. The co-op will be supportive of them in this cause and we will see them through until they succeed," Deveza said.

Fifty female native carabaos and two purebred bulls are scheduled for entrustment to the qualified farmers. The draft animals will aid farmers in tilling their land and in transporting their farm produce.

During the orientation, DA-PCC at CMU Center Director Dr. Lowell Paraguas gave the farmers an overview of what they can expect from being part of the CDP such as services they may avail of in production, marketing, and extension.

"PCC is mandated to conserve, propagate and promote the carabao as a source of milk, meat and draft power. We will continue to uphold this mandate for the benefit of the rural farmers and of the communities that we serve," Dr. Paraguas said.

Meanwhile, Dr. Elena Paraguas, DA-

PCC at CMU's CBED coordinator, gave her insights on the business opportunities in dairying. While farmers will be initially entrusted with draft animals, she encouraged them to eventually have their animals upgraded for dairying.

"Do not settle for less. Your native carabaos when upgraded into crossbreds are potential source of milk. You can soon engage in the dairy business, which can give you more income," Dr. Paraguas said.

Topics on animal entrustment and OIC cooperative membership procedures were also discussed by Jeson Candole, regional information officer of DA-PCC at CMU, and Joie Saquilayan, OIC membership and marketing development officer, respectively.

Facilitating the workshops were Lina Navarro, office staff of CDO 2nd District Representative Rufus Rodriguez, and Ilarda Tabalba, barangay councilor of F.S Catanico.

This project was agreed by Congressman Rodriguez and DA-PCC Executive Director Dr. Arnel Del Barrio during a budget hearing at the House of the Representatives on September 19, 2019.

Elyu farmers receive buffaloes for fattening

By Jan Rose Maon



As one component of the Department of Agriculture's Ahon Lahat, Pagkaing Sapat Kontra COVID-19 (ALPAS COVID-19) Program, 30 buffaloes for fattening were entrusted to farmer-members of Sudipen Dairy Farmers Association in Barangay Castro, Sudipen, La Union last July 1.

The DA-Philippine Carabao Center at Don Mariano Marcos Memorial State University (DA-PCC at DMMMSU), headed by its Officer in Charge Center Director Vilma Gagni, in partnership with the local government unit of La Union, spearheaded the activity.

"Kung mangangarap lang din tayo,

lakihan na natin (If we're going to dream, we better make it big)," DA-PCC Executive Director Dr. Arnel Del Barrio said in a motivational speech addressing the recipients of the buffaloes.

He said their small-scale association could very well become provincewide someday.

Marvin Macanas, chairman of the recipient association and a village-based AI technician, expressed his gratitude to PCC and the LGU of La Union for this project that is expected to provide livelihood opportunities to farmers.

After the short program, community feeding of more than

20 select children with 200 ml pasteurized carabao's milk was conducted under Gulay, Gatas, at Karne (GGK), which is another project component of ALPAS COVID-19.

The feeding program coincided with the celebration of the Nutrition Month with the theme "Batang Pinoy SANA TALL... Iwas stunting, SANA ALL!" with the objective of raising awareness on stunting among Filipino children and eventually reducing its prevalence.

The initiative is under one of the four components of the project called Unlad Lahi Project (ULaP), whose objective is to increase milk and meat production, create jobs, and provide livelihood for displaced farmers.



DA-PCC at MMSU assists pandemic-hit communities thru urban agriculture

By Mari Joan Nefulda

In response to the food crisis brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Agriculture-Philippine Carabao Center at Mariano Marcos State University (DA-PCC at MMSU) ushers immediate interventions for food production, availability, and accessibility.

In partnership with the Agricultural Training Institute-Regional Training Center I, the Department of Agriculture-Ilocos Norte Research and Experiment Center and the Municipal Agriculture

Office of the City of Batac, the project dubbed “Urban Gardening and Edible Landscaping: Intensifying Vegetable Production Towards a Food Secure Society” was launched in the City of Batac on July 6.

The intervention targets about 1,000 participants residing in urban barangays with limited area for vegetable production.

Under the project, training demonstrations will be held simultaneously in various

barangays. It was initially launched in Batac City to be followed by the municipality of Badoc on July 14-16 then in Laoag City on July 20-21.

Participating agencies provided resources and technical expertise to the beneficiaries. Starter kits that include vegetable seeds, seedlings, seedling trays, seedling bags, trowels, vermicast, compost, carbonized rice hull, nylon rope, straw, and IEC materials were distributed.

The project is aligned with the DA-PCC’s “Gatas, Gulay, at Karne (GGK) Project” under the DA’s “Ahon Lahat, Pagkaing Sapat (ALPAS) Kontra COVID-19”, specifically Urban Agriculture and Plant Plant Plant Program. The GGK promotes urban agriculture, food and feed production, value chain approach, and creation of livelihood opportunities as a source of income for vulnerable sectors in the midst of the global health emergency.



From page 1

DepEd, DA-PCC prep for tie-up program on school-based milk feeding



in the SBFP.

Said undertaking is led and implemented by the Department of Education (DepEd) in line with the law institutionalizing a national feeding program for undernourished children in public schools. The DA-PCC, meanwhile, joins the effort by linking DepEd to the suppliers of milk from participating dairy buffalo cooperatives.

The DA-PCC identified and tapped its assisted dairy farmer-cooperatives with valid licenses to operate from Food and Drugs Administration (FDA) as suppliers of milk in the feeding program, which include Ilocano Agri Coop, Northern Ilocos Sur Agri Coop, Bantog Samahang Nayan MPC, Rosario Dairy Farmers Coop, San Agustin Dairy Coop (SADACO), Integrated Farmers Coop, Eastern PMPC, Catalanacan MPC, NEFEDCCO, Pulong Buli MPC, Bataan Farmers Agri Coop, Tapulao MPC, Llano Farmers MPC, LGU Magdalena Processing Facility, Gen Trias Dairy Raisers MPC, The Rosario Livestock and Agriculture Farming Cooperative, Yamang Bukid Farm Palawan, Mindoro Dairy Coop, Gubat St. Anthony Cooperative/Albay Dairy Plant, Calinog Farmers Agriculture Coop (CAF-AGRI COOP), LAMAC MPC, San Julio Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Coop, Bohol Dairy Coop, Baybay Dairy Cooperative, Siari Valley

Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries MPC (SVARBEMCO), Baclay MPC, Muleta Side Buffalo Dairy Farmers Association MUSBUDA, and D & L Dairy farm.

The DepEd, through its Bureau of Learner Support Services-School Health Division (BLSS-SHD), allocated a total budget of Php154,319,824 for the purchase of carabao's milk to be used in feeding programs. Under the program, all undernourished Kindergarten to Grade 6 pupils, who are also SBFP beneficiaries for hot meals, will receive 200 ml toned carabao's milk daily for at least 20 feeding days.

"This program is not only beneficial to undernourished children but also to dairy value chain players as it has created a higher demand for locally produced milk, thus, providing them sustainable livelihood and boosting the local dairy industry," DA-PCC Executive Director Dr. Arnel Del Barrio said.

The DepEd and DA-PCC signed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) to embark on and implement a Milk Feeding Program in accordance with the mandates and objectives of RA No. 11037.

Several operating MOAs (OMOA) between the DA-PCC and Schools Division Offices (SDO) of DepEd were initially signed to launch the program.

Furthermore, a total of nine DA-PCC regional centers had inked OMOAs with SDOs in their respective areas.

"The milk feeding program is very timely to help boost the students' immune system against COVID-19 and improve their milk drinking habit as they grow up," Ma. Theresa Sawit, PCC's senior science research specialist and one of the focal persons for the project, said.

Pioneering the implementation of the SBFP-Milk Feeding Program are SDOs of Urdaneta City, Rosales, and Bacnotan in the provinces of Pangasinan and La Union, which started on August 24, September 1, and September 7, respectively.

Due to the global health crisis, each municipality will have its designated drop-off points for the delivery, inspection, and acceptance of the milk products. From the drop-off points, DepEd will conduct a house-to-house distribution of carabao's milk to the beneficiaries.

Apart from DA-PCC, DepEd also collaborates with the National Dairy Authority in the implementation of the Milk Feeding Program. Also joining the cause are local government units of select school beneficiaries and the Department of Social Welfare and Development. (With reports from Riozel Joy Suratos and Jan Rose Maon)

Bohol's dairy stakeholders strengthen collab for ART-ICDP

By Leinefe Aton



"The nutrition of a child in the first 1,000 days is very critical to mental development," Bohol Governor Arthur Yap said in his first meeting with dairy stakeholders providing direction to the dairy industry of the province.

This signals the conception of a comprehensive, multi-agency, and multi-sectoral dairy development project in Bohol called Agricultural Rural Transformation through Integrated Community Development Project (ART-ICDP).

This comprehensive proposal, formulated by the Provincial Government of Bohol through the Office of the Provincial Veterinarian (OPV), the Department of Agriculture-Philippine Carabao Center at Ubay Stock Farm (DA-PCC at USF) and DA-National Dairy Authority, and the Bohol

Dairy Cooperative (BODACO), mainstreams dairy farming as a major source of income in Bohol.

Dr. Stella Marie Lapid, Bohol provincial veterinarian, said the PLGU had already allocated funding for this undertaking.

"Nakita man jud ang dakong potential sa dairy dinhi sa province maong ato gyud gipanghingusgan nga ma implement gud ni siya pinaagi sa atong pagtinabangay (We have seen the great potential of dairying here in our province, that's why we will strengthen its implementation thru strong collaboration with each other)," Lapid said.

To fulfill the objectives of the project, the province needs to produce at least 1,250 li of raw milk a day or 150,000 li in 120 days to meet the requirement of 25,000

children-recipients of the feeding program. Ready-to-drink (RTD) milk in packs of 200 ml 25% toned milk will be distributed to the children for this purpose.

With a 21-liter per capita milk requirement, Bohol needs at least 7,583 milking animals producing 3 li a day to meet the demand for RTD alone. Currently, its raw milk supply is produced from the existing 1,726 dairy carabao herd and 233 dairy cattle herd.

The implementation

"This project was launched last December 2019 during the celebration of the 5th Bohol Dairy Festival. Implementation, however, was only started this year and will end by 2022," Lapid said.

With series of consultations, this will be carried out in three phases.



In the project proposal, ART-ICDP aims to achieve three major objectives: increase the income of the participating farm families by at least Php30,000.00 annually, enroll at least 1,000 dairy animals yearly, and provide 100% of the milk supply required for the National Feeding Program (RA 11037) in the province of Bohol.

Phase 1 covers social mobilization—DA-PCC at USF, OPV, and NDA will identify and select project areas; conduct project advocacy, marketing and orientation; and form dairy clusters. Phase 2 will be about trainings, organizational development and stakeholders' capacitation; expansion of dairy herd; and establishment of communal facilities. Lastly, Phase 3 deals with scaling-up of raw milk production and dairy product development to include establishment of related enterprises on silage production, feedmill, vermicomposting, and processing and marketing; and enhancement of private partnership and product development.

"We are eyeing 18 municipalities in this project. They are selected



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'Buro Booster' boosts feedstuff quality for ruminants

By Charlene Joanino

Buro booster (silage inoculant) is one of the newest technology innovations of the Department of Agriculture-Philippine Carabao Center (DA-PCC). It is an additive for corn, sorghum, and grass silage.



Local farmers can now feed their dairy animals with improved quality silage using the Buro Booster Silage Inoculant (BBSI) developed by a team from the Department of Agriculture-Philippine Carabao Center (DA-PCC).

This is on top of lesser spoilage during ensiling, which means higher silage yield, according to the DA-PCC Production Systems and Nutrition Section (PSNS), the developer of the inoculant.

The BBSI was introduced to farmer-members of Lupao Corn Farmers Association (LCFA) last August 13 in Lupao, Nueva Ecija.

The inoculant is an additive to corn, sorghum or grass silage. It contains *Lactobacillus plantarum* bacteria, which enhances lactic acid fermentation hence improving silage

quality and minimizing possible spoilage.

DA-PCC Executive Director Dr. Arnel Del Barrio said this is one of the agency's interventions to mitigate the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic to the livelihood of dairy farmers.

Buro Booster and corn silage

During an onsite demonstration, DA-PCC PSNS team member Reynaldo Amido said a 10 ml BBSI can be added to one handheld spray solution which is enough to a ton of silage. This means that a 1,000 ml or 1 liter bottle of the booster can be used for 100 tons of silage.

Amido said a solution with BBSI lasts for 24 hours and should be applied within that time.

"By spraying a solution with BBSI on the silage, we enhance its lactic acid composition thus improving its quality," he said. There is about 1 million bacteria in 1 ml of BBSI which makes it potent, he added.

The University of the Philippines-Los Baños' National Institute of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology gave the starter culture, which was propagated by the DA-PCC for Buro Booster.

Said inoculant can be stored up to six months in the refrigerator to help preserve its bacteria.

Meanwhile, according to Rogelio Antiquera, DA-PCC Science Research Technician III, corn stover (bagaso) is a good source of energy and is favorable for ensiling because it has 65% to 70% moisture content that reduces likelihood of spoilage.



Corn can be harvested 75 to 80 days after planting while ensiling its stover takes 21 days. A good corn silage with all the nutrients intact can last from one to three years.

Ensiling is a technology where feedstuff for ruminants such as corn and forage grasses are preserved through anaerobic fermentation.

Another advantage of corn stover ensiling is that the harvesting of corn is commonly done during summer where the grass feedstuff for carabaos are lacking.

The technology also helps in the protection of the environment. For example, stover, a by-product of corn that is usually burned will no longer contribute to pollution when ensiled.

The business of ensiling amid pandemic

LCFA chairman Isagani Cajucom sees the importance of the Buro Booster as a means to sustain his own corn silage venture.

The LCFA can produce 100 to 300 tons corn silage a month during the corn season. However, a leaner market demand due to the pandemic has led them to cut their production down to 50 tons. A 40-kg sack of corn silage is sold at Php30-Pphp40.

"Applying the inoculant to the silage ensures that it can last a long time because it prevents molds while in storage awaiting potential buyers. This gives us ample time to look for buyers," Cajucom said.

Cajucom started his business engagement in ensiling in 2013 after his participation in the project "Commercialization of

Grass/ Forage Corn Silage for Dairy Buffaloes in Lupao Through Technomart."

Said project is a collaboration between DA-PCC and the Department of Science and Technology-Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development (DOST-PCAARRD).

"Silage improves the body condition of carabaos. Healthy dairy animals produce more milk," Cajucom, who is also a carabao raiser, said.

Select farmers from San Jose City also received Buro Booster packs from DA-PCC. Dr. Del Barrio said the starter kit can help farmers earn additional income while under a tight financial situation due to the emergency health crisis.

(With information from the article of Ma. Cecilia Irang)

Dairy biz in the 'New Normal'

this, a commodity's marketability in the food industry is determined by its health benefits to consumers.

Carabao's milk as a commodity remains resilient in this challenging time. Its nutritive value and noble purpose in the scheme of a social transformation presents a different story.

To extend the market reach of carabao's milk products elsewhere from its primary source in Nueva Ecija, DA-PCC knows it has to engage online resellers to serve as additional market channels.

Data from the DA-PCC shows that its Central Dairy Collecting and Processing Facility processed a total of 91,615.80 liters of milk from March 16 to June 20. Of this volume, 22,252.52 liters were sold by 37 online resellers amid the community quarantine due to the pandemic, which is 17% of the total milk processed.

The online resellers registered a total sale of Php1,333,151.09. These figures represent the amount of sheer dedication contributed by the online

resellers who helped in the online marketing and door-to-door delivery of dairy products in Nueva Ecija, including San Jose City, Cabanatuan City, Guimba, Palayan City, Bongabon, and Rizal. The same case ensued in other areas in Luzon, such as Metro Manila, Bulacan, Pampanga, Tarlac, Pangasinan, La Trinidad Benguet, La Union, and Aurora.

We took the time to sit down in a remote interview with these resellers, and we hope that their stories inspire many as they have inspired us.

What encouraged you to go into reselling carabao's milk products?

Aaron Baligod, a young entrepreneur from Quezon City, recalled when he accompanied his mother to deliver fresh milk to a friend who has a

kidney problem. Aaron witnessed how a sluggish person suddenly livened up with the product. In that instance, Baligod took a turning point to finally heed his mother's advice for him to venture into selling dairy products as she is an avid drinker of carabao's milk.

The same passion for helping others through a dairy business venture has prompted Wilson Flores, owner of Kamuning Bakery Café in Quezon City, to go into reselling carabao's milk products. This was after he learned that the pandemic's economic setback had plagued many farmers. Today, his bakery has become a go-to place for customers who want to get hold of the nutritious and immuno-booster carabao's milk.

Joining in this advocacy of bringing carabao's milk to more people is a retired geothermal expert, Almario Baltazar, Jr. Aside from having this as an additional source of income, Baltazar believes that marketing these products makes him a vital courier of excellent Filipino foods to more Pinoy family's table.



AARON BALIGOD
Quezon City



WILSON LEE FLORES
Kamuning Bakery Cafe, Quezon City



ALMARIO BALTAZAR JR.
Guiguinto, Bulacan

This pride is recognized by the couple Alexander and Evadyn Paraguas of Balungao, Pangasinan. Alexander, who used to work with DA-PCC, knows that carabao's milk products developed by the agency through its advocacy hub Milka Krem are authentically "fresh and natural", as promised in its brand tagline. While thinking of reselling Milka Krem products, the couple reached out to frontliners in their hometown during the community quarantine.

In this roster of carabao's milk advocates, Lorraine Sagun is the youngest, but her enthusiasm to engage in the dairy business venture is inspiring. Sagun is a third-year college student taking up BS Internal Audit from Bayambang, Pangasinan. While caught up in a lockdown due to the health crisis, she looked for opportunities to be productive while the opening of classes was put on hold. She buckled down to learn more about effective marketing and eventually embarked on reselling carabao's milk and encouraged others to go into the dairy business themselves.

What were your marketing strategies?

Paraguas and Sagun recognize social media platforms' power as a marketing strategy and highly recommended their use among other sellers.

"We utilized the available content in marketing our products, such as sharing Milka Krem's posts on our page. Surprisingly, we received an all-positive response from our Facebook friends," Paraguas said.

Similarly, Sagun posted different carabao's milk products on her social media accounts, where she received a lot of inquiries and orders.

"I was able to establish a wider market reach not only in my hometown but also in the neighboring towns of Malasiqui, Calasiao, Dagupan City, Lingayen,

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Why carabao's milk?



"With the travel and health restrictions still imposed by the government due to the pandemic, online selling/ reselling has become a popular marketing platform, which provided business opportunities for the online resellers. Since carabao's milk is very nutritious as it has a calorie content, which is a source of energy needed to sustain bodily functions, and is also rich in magnesium, potassium, calcium, and phosphorus, online resellers find it easy to offer the milk products to customers thus providing them with good profit and better income."

MINA ABELLA
DA-PCC CEDS Head



COUPLE ALEXANDER AND EVADYN PARAGUAS
Balungao, Pangasinan



LORRAINE SAGUN
Bayambang, Pangasinan

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Dairy biz in the 'New Normal'



Urdaneta City, Villasis, Alcala, Bautista, Basista, and select areas in La Union," she shared.

Flores, meanwhile, gifted the dairy products to his acquaintances who haven't tried any of them yet, intending to turn them to become his regular customers.

"Initially, I would buy some of the unsold dairy products every week, then give them for free to my sister's family and our bakers and staff. I considered this as my bonus for their hard work because even when there was a lockdown, we continued operating the bakery," he said.

The retail price of some of our dairy products is not within the budget of our customers. This is the reason why Baligod ensures that his works are still affordable for "all" kinds of customers, regardless of their socio-economic status.

"We relied on the distributor's discounts from Milka Krem and placed a minimum markup, making our products relatively cheaper than the competing brands in the market," he said.

Baligod's team also offered free deliveries to limited areas in Quezon City to ensure that customers will

have access to the dairy products despite the travel restrictions.

What would you advise to new and aspiring online resellers?

These dairy advocates' unanimous advice: take pride and patronize first the local produce yourselves so that you may have a firsthand taste of Filipino's ingenuity.

"By being a patron of dairy products yourself, you are helping and supporting our local dairy buffalo farmers," Flores said.

The Paraguas couple, on the other hand, reminded aspiring resellers or business people to be more patient in accommodating customer concerns and considering every feedback.

Baligod imparted wise counsel from his parents about being in business while in the time of a pandemic saying, "To be successful in this business, you should not take advantage of the current situation by adding a huge markup

in the retail price. We are all trying to survive in these trying times. So, the only way for all of us to overcome this crisis is to think 'we' and not 'me.'"

Being the youngest online reseller, Sagun said that the biggest takeaway from her experience as a neophyte businesswoman is the importance of saving money to have a fallback should something unexpected happen like this COVID-19 outbreak.

"To start a business, you'll need financial backing to get it off the ground. I spent my savings on selling dairy products last May 7. I could now humbly tell you that my four-digit savings in my moneybox have already hit six figures in my passbook account," she happily averred.

The pandemic seems to linger for a while more in the absence of a vaccine, which could bring economic uncertainty in the local dairy industry and the thousands of dairy farmers dependent on it.

However, hope is what these resellers have brought in the picture as farmers struggle to stay afloat. Their stories tell us that there is so much goodness in people, shining brightly even more in the trying times.

To date, around Php6.1 million was utilized for the 60-day milk feeding program benefitting 5,130 children. The objective of this project is to boost the immunity of members of the vulnerable sectors and at the same time help the dairy farmer market their produce even in the face of crisis.

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Bohol's dairy stakeholders...

because of the presence of potential dairy animals, both carabao and cattle, in their town and some of these are within the existing dairy zones," Lapiz explained.

"Another consideration in the selection of project areas is their proximity to a processing plant," she added.

According to Lapiz, the process flow basically starts in marketing the project to the municipal mayors of the identified project areas. Then, veterinary clinic and estrus synchronization (ES) and artificial insemination (AI) will be conducted onsite by OPV, DA-PCC at USF and NDA wherein pre-enrolment and selection of animals will be conducted.

Once the animals get pregnant, the team will schedule dairy enterprise orientation seminars and trainings for the owners or caretakers. From here onward, the standard groundworks for dairy enterprise development will ensue.

The updates

Early this year, the team had already conducted activities under Phase 1. As of date, 1,014 animals were pre-enrolled (628 Carabao and 386 Cattle) in the program from the initial three municipalities. Meanwhile, 50 animals are expected to queue in the milking line in San Miguel, 161 in Mabini, and 39 in Talibon.

In response to COVID-19 pandemic, the Provincial Government of Bohol launched its "WE SURVIVE BOHOL AS ONE" program. One of its sub-projects is a community milk-feeding program in 17 municipalities with the highest number of malnourished children. The PLGU allocated Php10 million for this purpose.

The implementation of this project was facilitated by the Provincial Nutrition Council, Education Center, OPV and DA-PCC at USF in collaboration with the Municipal Nutrition Council in the targeted

municipalities. Milk is supplied by the BODACO.

"BODACO, which consolidates the milk produced by the farmers and leads the establishment of the dairy enterprise, is also essential in the implementation of the ART-ICDF project because they (the farmers) are the main reason why these efforts are made," according to Dr. Gundolino P. Bajenting, OIC-Center Director of DA-PCC at USF.

Meanwhile, the PLGU awarded one tractor to BODACO in June 2020 to facilitate the forage production of farmers. The DA-PCC at USF also gave an initial two sets of water system paraphernalia to two dairy farmer clusters in Mabini, 10 sacks of dairy concentrates and one 20-kg mineral blocks as part of its refocused activities to mitigate the effect of the pandemic.



ALPAS SA COVID-19

AHON LAHAT, PAGKAING SAPAT KONTRA COVID-19

OBJECTIVES



ULaP

UNLAD LAHI PROJECT

Increase milk and meat production, job creation, and providing livelihood for displaced farmers



COVID

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES
THROUGH VALUE INNOVATIONS
AND DEVELOPMENT

Enhance food productivity, availability, accessibility and sustainability through applicable technologies and value innovations, and create livelihood opportunities thru value adding interventions to provide income for farmers affected by COVID-19 crisis



GCK

GATAS, GULAY
AT KARNE

Promote integrated urban agriculture or mixed farming system in the villages, create livelihood opportunities as source of income in areas affected by COVID-19, enhance food and feed production, availability and sustainability of supply, and ensure the value chain approach



**CARA-
ARALAN**

Sustain access to information, education, and communication (IEC) by farmers, carapreneurs, and other carabao industry value chain actors, and contribute to capacity development of farmers, carapreneurs, and other carabao industry value chain actors



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