

# DA eyes higher palay harvest in 2020

By DA

Department of Agriculture (DA) targets to produce more palay (unhusked rice) and import less rice this year, as farmers begin to reap the initial benefits of the government's Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) program.

"We aim to harvest 19.6 million metric tons (MMT) of palay, net of damage due to adverse weather conditions," said Agriculture Secretary William Dar, during his first media briefing, on January 3, 2020, at the DA main office in Quezon City.

"Our 2020 palay yield forecast would be three percent more than the estimated 2019 palay output of 19 MMT," added the recently-confirmed DA chief.

"We expect that initial

benefits of interventions under the P10-billion RCEF program, particularly on inbred rice seeds given free to farmers, will be realized during the dry and main season crops starting this year," Secretary Dar added.

Inbred certified palay seeds produce an average of 4.54 MT/ha as compared to farmer home-saved seeds' yield of 3.50 MT/ha and traditional seeds' yield of 2.13 MT/ha, according to the DA-Philippine Rice Re-

search Institute (DA-PhilRice).

"Hence, with RCEF seed intervention, we would generate an incremental yield of at least one MMT, as we will provide farmers nationwide, tilling a total of one million hectares, free certified palay seeds," said Secretary Dar.

The DA-PhilRice started distributing certified palay seeds in October 2019 for the dry-season planting in 947 rice-producing towns and cities in 57 provinces.

Under RCEF, P3 billion is set aside each year for certified seeds up to 2024, where farmers will receive (SEE PAGE 7)



*Kasama ang iba pang mga miyembro ng Kongreso, dumalo ang inyong lingkod sa Ceremonial Signing ni Pangulong Rodrigo Roa Duterte sa pagsasabatas ng General Appropriations Act 2020 (GAA).*

*Naniniwala tayo na ang Pambansang Budget na ito ay lubos na makakatulong sa mga pangunahing proyekto at programa ng kasalukuyang administrasyon kabilang na ang edukasyon, kalusugan at mga proyektong pang-imprastruktura.*

## City Government of Bacoor



Gold para sa Bacoor! Pinarangalan ng Gold Award ang Lungsod ng Bacoor ng Department of the Interior and Local Government para sa patuloy na pagpupursige nito sa Manila Bay Clean-up Rehabilitation and Preservation Program at LGU Compliance Assessment. Tinanggap ni Mayor Lani Mercado Revilla ang parangal mula sa mga kinatawan ng DILG at DENR: DILG Provincial Director Lionel Dalope, DILG Cluster Head Celia Martal, CLGOO Norma Corpuz, LGOO Brian Ballon, Manila Bay Program Officers Don Paolo Teodoro at Kristel Cale Francisco, DENR-PENRO Judaline Fabro, at DENRO-PENRO Aileen Joy Es

## Harvesting the earned hard work from mushrooms



Mushroom in colors white, yellow, gray, and pink, varying from the size of a fist to wider than a human's head. This miraculous fungi gives lots of benefits to the body, which includes prevention of illnesses and boosting of immune system. These mushrooms became not just a help in health for everyone but also delivers good fortune in Myrna's life.

Mushroom is not easy to cultivate. There are several procedures to follow thus it needed focus and should be hands-on. From building the protein bags to sterilizing and packaging the finished products.

Investing on right thing, In 14 years in the mushroom business, Myrna Alonsagay, a resident of Trece Martires City, Cavite, built a remarkable journey from scratch.

Myrna was a plain housewife while her husband is a Pastor when she found out about mushroom business that has been introduced to her by her friend from Taiwan. She later discovered CARD Bank, Inc., and from there, the loan she got helped her expand her business.

After years of running her business, she was transferred to CARD SME Bank

so she can avail of large amount for her business to grow more.

Inspired to strive more, Business will not always be successful in the first try. Problems transpired and there were always be trials and errors. Those hindrances didn't stop Myrna and her husband to learn the ins and outs of the business. It helped them seek more knowledge to handle challenges.

"Dedication, passion, and hard work are some of the values a businessman must have in order to stay and be successful in their business," Myrna said.

As her business continually flourish, she was introduced to Mga Likha ni Inay, the retail marketing arm of CARD MRI. This introduction paved the way to more opportunities for her business.

"I am very much thankful to Mga Likha ni Inay for guiding me in creating a stable business and helping me in promoting my products to a bigger market."

MLNI sets the stage for the goods of CARD MRI microfinance clients in the mainstream market

to help them and their products be known in bigger markets.

As they gain more experience and knowledge, they started to innovate their products, a good

sign of being a good entrepreneur. No wonder, this helped them gain access to better

opportunities.

Myrna sought new ways to innovate their mushroom products to keep attuned with changing

taste buds of the consuming public. She didn't hesitate to combine the mushroom with other

products to make it mushroom-version of foods.

Incidentally, Myrna another farm in Amadeo,

(SEE PAGE 7)

## Model of transparency

Up to now, it is not very clear what legal grounds the Office of the Ombudsman headed by justice Samuel Martires has in unilaterally imposing a ban on the release of a copy of the 2018 statements of assets, liabilities and net worth (SALN) of government officials who are mandated by the country's laws to submit annually to the anti-graft body. By unknown reasons, the Ombudsman has suspended the release to the media of the 2018 SALNs particularly of both President Duterte and Vice President Leni Robredo.

Except citing that his office is currently revising its policy on public access to SALNs, Martires has refused to allow media to secure copies of these public documents.

But under an existing Memorandum Circular 6 Series of 2012, issued by Martires' predecessor, retired justice Conchita Carpio-Morales, SALNs filed with the Office of the Ombudsman "shall be made available to the public for inspection and reproduction after 10 working days from the time they are filed."

Section 8 of Republic Act (RA) 6713, or the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees also mandates public officials and employees to timely file their SALNs, stating that "the public has the right to know their assets, liabilities, net worth and financial and business interests, including those of their spouses and of unmarried children under 18 years of age living in their households."

This is not to mention that our country's 1987 Constitution also guarantees the public's right to information.

"Access to official records, and to documents and papers pertaining to official acts, transactions or decisions as well as to government research data used as basis for policy development, shall be afforded the citizen, subject to such limitations as may be provided by law," Article III, Section 7 of the 1987 Constitution states.

Aside from President Duterte and Vice President Robredo, this directive of the Ombudsman covers also the 2018 SALNs of the respective heads of the constitutional bodies, namely: Sheriff Abas, chairman of the Commission on Elections; Michael Aguinaldo, chairman of the Commission on Audit; Jose Luis Gascon, chairman of the Commission on Human Rights; Alicia dela Rosa-Bala, chairman of the Civil Service Commission as well as that of Martires.'

As provided by the country's laws, all government officials and employees are required to submit their annual SALNs on or before April 30 of each year. On the day of the deadline, The Philippine STAR officially made a written request to the Office of the Ombudsman for a copy of the 2018 SALNs of the President in compliance.

In the past practice, the requesting party would just have to present a government-issued ID and fill out a form stating the purpose for the requested documents from the Office of the Ombudsman.

Our reporter assigned at the Ombudsman Elizabeth Marcelo diligently followed up and tracked down the whereabouts of her letter/request. Staff members of the Ombudsman's Central Records Division (CRD), Public Assistance Bureau (PAB) and the Ombudsman Proper all told her that said request remains pending at the office of Martires. They all informed her such request would still have to be personally approved by Martires himself.

But days passed, there was no response from the Ombudsman. Isn't it there an existing law and reiterated in a directive issued no less by President Duterte that public query or request—whether adverse or favorable—must be replied to within a period of not more than one week?

It was only on May 17 when she finally received an e-mail from the PAB regarding Martires' directive. Per the

new rule of the Ombudsman, an endorsement letter from the news desk stating the purpose for the SALN request would have to be submitted on top of the request form. In compliance of this new rule, she submitted on May 20 my signed endorsement—as head of our news desk—confirming her letter-request. As of yesterday, the request still remains pending.

A staff member from the Office of the Ombudsman said a reply on The STAR's request would be sent by post. The staff, however, refused to give additional details on whether the request was approved or denied. Later, we found out other media entities trying to secure a copy of President Duterte's SALN also got the same reply from the Ombudsman.

"Please note that the processing of your request has been held in abeyance pending the review and revision of the policies and rules of the Office of the Ombudsman regarding the release of SALNs," the letter dated June 18 signed by Assistant Ombudsman Pilarita Lapitan read.

"In the meantime, may we advise that you direct your request to the Office of the President and the Office of the Vice President," it added.

The ABS-CBN network was able to secure a copy of Robredo's SALN from the Office of the Vice President. In their story, the ABS-CBN also cited the Office of the Ombudsman held SALN requests "in abeyance" pending a "review and revision" of its policies on the release of SALNs.

Martires earlier told reporters there seems to him no law expressly giving au-

## 'Philippines one of the worst countries to live for minimum wage earners'

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines is one of the worst countries to live for minimum wage earners, a new report by e-commerce firm Picodi released Tuesday found.

In January 2020, monthly net pay received by minimum wage earners in the Philippines stood at P5,922, 10.2% higher than P5,376 they got in the same month last year.

That placed the Philippines at the 17th spot out of 54 countries tracked by Picodi in terms of rate of increase in minimum wage year-on-year. In comparison, minimum wage jumped 9.1% in Malaysia, 8.7% in Hong Kong and 1.6% in Thailand this month.

However, high food prices are eating up a significant portion of the compensation that minimum wage earners in the Philippines

took home. According to Picodi, minimum wage earners in the country spend 75.1% of their monthly salary on basic

food items alone.

But the surge in wages outran the increase in prices in the Philippines this year, Picodi said, with basic food products previously accounting for 81.3% of workers' monthly pay.

The best ratio of food prices to the minimum wage was noted in Australia, followed by the United Kingdom and Ireland. In these countries, workers spend 7% of their monthly pay on essential food products, Picodi reported.

"In some countries, like Nigeria or Uzbekistan, the minimum wage is so low that it does not cover the costs of even the most basic shopping basket," Picodi said.

"Depending on the country, the minimum wage concerns from few to several dozens percent of the working population. By definition, the minimum wage should protect employees against unduly low earnings," it added.

In 2018, President Rodrigo Duterte signed the Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion law, which lowers personal income taxes while raising excise levies on fuel and "sin" products, among others.

The Department of Finance said the tax reform law allowed workers to receive an additional P111.7 billion in 2018.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** All comments and opinions submitted by our contributing writers and herein published shall remain as personal opinion of our column writers. Viewliner shall not be held liable to any legal issues related to any commentaries that may appear herein.



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# OST Food Safety Teams cap off HRD Project

By: Myrrh Caithlin L. Gutierrez, DOST-CALABARZON

DOST Food Safety Focal persons from different regions in the Philippines convene for the last time this year to report about their accomplishments and to cap off the Human Resource Development Project (HRDP) on Food Safety.

The project implementation review was held at Bayview Park Hotel Manila from December 16-17, 2019. USec. Brenda L. Nazareth-Manzano, Undersecretary for Regional Operations, Dr. Alexander R. Madrigal, Regional Director of DOST-CALABARZON, Dr. Mario Capanzana, Director of FNRI, Engr. Ninaliza Escorial, Chief of Industrial Technology Development Division -PCIEERD, and Ms. Emelita P. Bagsit, OIC Office of the Regional Director of

DOST Region V, were present in the event to listen to the updates on the accomplishments of the different regional offices' focal persons.

The two-day program was kick started by Dr. Madrigal's opening remarks in which he congratulated everyone for a job well done and for completing the HRDP efficiently. In his remarks, he emphasized that the project is dedicated to the Filipino people. "This project is not for us. It is for our country- so that we can protect our people, the children, and ensure safe food for every Filipino", he said.

Dr. Lydia S. Manguiat, Assistant Regional Director for Technical Operations of DOST-CALABARZON and the project coordinator, then explained the rationale of the project implementation review. She also discussed about FSHRDP's accomplishments vis a vis the set targets.

As of December 2019, the DOST hosted and participated in the meetings and write shops of the Food Safety Regulation Coordinating Board (FSRCB)'s Technical Working Group (TWG) on Food Safety Training. The FSTs also drafted the training guidelines. Moreover, they conducted five trainings on Human Resource Development. The FSTs also created linkages with agencies such



as Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Health (DOH), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), and Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA). They also assisted a total of 546 MSMEs/firms to comply with Food Safety Standards and trained more than 100 Food Safety team members and Laboratory Analysts.

Usec. Nazareth-Manzano delivered her inspirational message highlighting her amusement as she witnessed how all the regions gave their best shot in the tasks assigned to them. She congratulated the whole DOST Food Safety Team for finishing strong and impactful.

Dr. Mario V. Capanzana, Project Leader of the DOST Integrated Food Safety Programs (IFSP) then gave his updates on the IFSP.

For two days, the HRDP focal persons of the regional offices, RDIs (ITDI and FNRI), and councils (PCAARRD, PCHRD, and

PCIEERD) shared their HRDP accomplishments. They also got to collaborate by sharing and reacting to each other's presentations. As a culminating activity, a workshop was held to brainstorm on the future plans for the sustenance of the project. The program was closed by Engr. Niñaliza Escorial, Chief, DOST-PCIEERD.

HRDP is a project that ran from October 2018 to December 2019. It is pur-

sued to develop competent service providers (trainers, consultants, and laboratory analysts) who shall serve as experts in providing food safety-related trainings, consultancy, technical services, and laboratory analyses, and to accelerate the effective implementation of Republic Act 10611 or the Food Safety Act of 2013.

## Harvesting.....

Cavite which she will turn the place into an Agrifarm in the future.

Partner to development

"I have a strong loyalty to CARD MRI because they didn't stop from shaping a person in

becoming the best that she can be. I am very much thankful for the trust that they gave me,"

shared Myrna as she reminisced all the hardships she endured in her business.

"From plain housewife to a business owner. I personally want to send my deepest appreciation

## DA eyes ....

40 kilograms (kg) per hectare of certified rice seed varieties for every planting season. "Further, with the adoption of modern technologies, and mechanizing land preparation, crop establishment and harvesting, farmers could attain an incremental yield of another one MMT of palay per hectare," the DA chief said.

Also under RCEF, the DA-Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization (DA-PhilMech) will distribute P5-billion worth of farm machines and equipment to qualified farmers' cooperatives and associations, and local government units.

PhilMech research shows that mechanizing rice farming operations can reduce total palay production cost by P4/kg from the current average of P12/kg.

"We have yet to mechanize Philippine agriculture, at a level of at least four horsepower (hp) per hectare (ha), and be at par with our ASEAN counterparts," said Secretary Dar.

Studies of the DA-PhilMech show the country's level of mechanization is 1.23 hp/ha for all crops, 2.31 hp/ha for rice in all provinces, and 3 hp/ha in major rice-producing provinces like Isabela and Nueva Ecija. Under RCEF, rice farmers will also receive credit support worth P1B, through Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP) and Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP), and another P1B for trainings and scholarships through the DA's Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) and DOLE's Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA).(DA)

to CARD Bank and MLNI for believing in my skill, my business, and my products, and that I can do more," Myrna said. "I hope they will help more small entrepreneurs to be successful and more stories of achievement will be shared," she concluded. Myrna Alonsagay, owner of Myrna's Miraculous Mushroom and a proud client of Likha ni Inay. Jeffrey C. Tandingan, Corporate Communications Office jeff.tandingan@cardmicon.com 0998-952-5419



Republic of the Philippines  
Province of Cavite  
MUNICIPALITY OF CARMONA  
MUNICIPAL INFORMATION TOURISM CULTURE AND ARTS OFFICE

## "D.A.H.L.I.A. 2020 (Direct Access to Healthy Lifestyle,

Intervention, and Advocacy): Bawat isa ay may ngiti sa bayang masigla lagi"

The Direct Access to Healthy Lifestyle, Intervention, and Advocacy or more commonly

known as D.A.H.L.I.A., is an initiative by the Municipal Government of Carmona, Cavite.

Through this program, the local government aims to promote and encourage its citizens to

adapt a healthy lifestyle through regular exercises and balanced diet.

This year, the

D.A.H.L.I.A. program shall be celebrating its 14th anniversary with the

theme "Bawat isa ay may ngiti sa bayang masigla lagi." As the annual organizer, the Municipal

Health Office also imparted that they're expecting 4,000 participants from different sectors who'll

join this healthy lifestyle movement. There will also be guests from GMA and Silang, Cavite.

The 14th anniversary of D.A.H.L.I.A. shall take place at the Carmona Town

Plaza on

January 31, 2019, Friday at 4:00 PM. It will start with street aerobics at Poblacion, followed by

the mass aerobics at the plaza. For further inquiries regarding the D.A.H.L.I.A. program, these

can be directed to Dr. Homer L. Aguinaldo, the Municipal Health Officer, or Ms. Estelita Q.

Cadiente, Health Education and Promotion Officer. They can be reached at (046) 430-3072 or (046) 443-5397.



### GRAND MEDICAL MISSION IN BACOOR

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JANUARY 24, 2020 | 8AM TO 12NN

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\*For patients with health conditions, please seek clearance from the City Health Office prior to tooth extraction

FOR INQUIRIES, PLEASE CONTACT  
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PHILIPPINE MEDICAL SOCIETY OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA  
and the OFFICE OF CONG. STRIKE B. REVILLA

In coordination with the City Government of Bacoor  
and the Provincial Government of Cavite



## Hijos Tours trains locals of Davao in tour guiding



As part of its mission to promote Philippine tourism and culture by empowering women, CARD MRI Hijos Tours organized a two-day tour guide training at Hotel Uno, Davao City.

The training was participated in by seven CARD microfinance clients. It aims to produce tour guides who are passionate to share the identity, heritage, culture, and history of the province to the travelers of the tour company.

They were taught about history, culture, and heritage of Mindanao specifically Davao City to give them the basic foundation of an Hijos tour guide.

CARD MRI Hijos Tours is a community-based travel and tour company that integrates its microfinance clients of CARD in its tour programs to provide them additional source of income.

"It is our creative way of giving additional income generating activities to these clients. We have seen potentials in our clients that need to be properly developed," said Marilyn M. Manila, Hijos Tours president.

The travel and tours company was established on July 11, 2017 under CARD MRI to provide an experience where history and tradition meet empowerment.

She also shared that the tour program also teaches the locals to take pride of their community and create a livelihood from it as the company's suppliers. From food to souvenir items, it all comes from the community.

As of November 2019, Hijos Tours has a total of 2,649 travelers with 12 tour guides in its three tour programs.

## City Government of Bacoor



Mahigit sa 350 ang nakabilang sa Araw ng Pagtatapos sa ating mga mag-aaral sa TESDA na pinangunahan ng ating Livelihood Center. Kasama sa dumalo sa kaganapan ang ating City Administrator Jerome Oliveros, TESDA Cavite Provincial Director Conrado E. Maraan Jr., City Councilor Mike Bautista, at City Livelihood Officer in Charge Lita Gawaran. Nagtapos ang mga mag-aaral sa mga sumusunod na kurso: Beadwork, Beauty Care, Bread and Pastry Production, Cake Decoration, Candle Making, Commercial Baking, Cookery, Dressmaking NCII, Floral Arrangement, Food and Beverage Services, Hairdressing, at Massage Therapy. Congratulations po sa mga nagtapos!

