



Hibla

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Secretary Alcala signs Department Circular for the General Guidelines for the Accreditation of Abaca Plant Nurseries

The Department of Agriculture (DA) Secretary Proceso J. Alcala recently signed DA Department Circular No. 01, Series of 2016, entitled “General Guidelines for the Accreditation of Abaca Plant Nurseries (AAPN)”.

The guidelines will regulate the production and distribution of abaca planting materials which will assure the production of quality fibers and its by-products. On the other hand, the abaca plant nursery operators shall be benefitted through access to technical assistance from the government and shall be given priority in acquiring identified abaca plant propagules from the government registered mother block nurseries.

The AAPN also serves as one of the tools to control, if not totally stop, the spread of abaca pests and diseases that has long been plaguing abaca farms nationwide. This accreditation scheme will ensure the distribution of clean abaca planting materials. With the AAPN, purchases of abaca plantlets cannot be done from just about everywhere since buying can only be made from accredited growers.

These guidelines for the AAPN were subjected to a public consultation, a series of deliberation with the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) representatives, Ms. Andrea Inocencio and Mr. Danilo Dannug, and fine tuning with the DA before it was finally issued as a Department Circular.

The general guidelines are a first in the PhilFIDA, following the shift in its mandate after the approval of the rationalization plan of the agency. This mandate strengthened the standards implementation and trade regulation functions of the agency and accordingly, the function of accreditation of seed growers and machine fabricators was included.

The PhilFIDA and BPI will jointly implement this AAPN scheme with the two agencies now sharing the same mandate on accreditation.

The said Circular was published in the Philippine Star on 29 March 2016 and shall take effect fifteen days after its publication. 🌿



PhilFIDA conducts training on Bt Cotton Risk Assessment

Eleven (11) community representatives, composed mainly of Municipal/City Agriculture Officers and Barangay Chairmen from Batac, Ilocos Norte, Alabel, Sarangani, Alcala, Pangasinan and Tupi and Polomolok, South Cotabato were trained on Bt Cotton risk assessment, along with fourteen (14) Bt cotton implementers in Luzon and Mindanao. This was made possible under the project entitled *Risk Assessment Capability Enhancement (RACE)*, also known as Bt Cotton RACE, funded by the Biotechnology Program Office of the Department of Agriculture (DA).

The RACE training improved the knowledge, skills and approaches of participants on pre-planting requirements to disposal of GMO debris after harvest. The modules discussed by experts from the Biotechnology Coalition of the Philippines, the Bureau of Plant Industry, the Department of the DA-Biotech Advisory Team, cotton crop breeding and crop protection specialists from the Philippine Fiber Industry Development Authority, and DA-Biotech Program Office covered general knowledge on biotechnology and GMO regulatory framework in the Philippines.

The community representatives were exposed to biosafety issues on genetically modified organisms and can already be tapped in their respective areas when future similar GMO evaluation and propagation, particularly on Bt cotton, will be implemented. 🌱

PhilFIDA plants Buri in Polomolok

A Tree Planting Activity became the highlight of the annual management conference which was held on 08 to 13 February 2016 in General Santos City. On the fourth day of the conference, sixty (60)



Bt Cotton RACE Training Participants with the PhilFIDA OIC Executive Director Clarito M. Barron, Ph. D. CESO IV (front row middle) at the Paladin Hotel, Baguio City

PhilFIDA distributes IHSD during Farmers-Fisher Folks Forum in Bayawan City

Ten units of Improved Hand Stripping Devices (IHSD), designed by the PhilFIDA Fiber Utilization and Technology Division (FUTD), were distributed during the Farmers and Fisher Folks Forum held at the Integrated Business Center (IBC) in Bayawan City of the Negros Island Region (NIR) last 21 January 2016. The distribution of the hand stripping devices was headed by Secretary Proceso Alcala of the Department of Agriculture (DA). The Secretary was assisted by Honorable Congressman Henry Pryde Teves of the Third District of Negros Oriental, DA-Regional Field Unit (RFU) NIR Executive Director Rene Manantan, DA-RFU 7 Executive Director Angel Enriquez and the PhilFIDA 7 and NIR personnel.

The beneficiaries of IHSD distribution are the Avocado Family Farm Association of Sitio Avocado, Brgy.

Talalak, Santa Catalina, Negros Oriental; Bantolinao United Farmers Association of Brgy. Cabangahan, Siaton, Negros Oriental; Balayong Abaca Farmers Association of Brgy. Balayong, Pamplona, Negros Oriental; Candanaay Farmers Association of Brgy. Candanaay, Ayungon, Negros Oriental; of Barangay Candabong, Manjuyod, Negros Oriental; Calinawan Tampa Moros - Moros Escaquit Abaca Farmers Association of Brgy. Escaquit, Sibulan, Negros Oriental; and Nalundan United Farmers Association, Inc., of Brgy. Nalundan, Bindoy, Negros Oriental.

A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was prepared and signed by the representatives of each beneficiary and LGU concerned during the turn-over ceremony. The DA-RFUs distributed farm equipment, fertilizers, livestock, vegetables seeds and assorted planting materials for fruits. Aside from the PhilFIDA, the Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation

continued on page 4...

participants were led by Director Clarito M. Barron and visited the Polomolok Research Station (PRS) in South Cotabato purposely to conduct the tree planting activity. The Regional Office X brought a total of 1,600 Buri plantlets intended to be planted at a

designated block of 1.25 hectares in accordance with the PRS's development plan. All the 60 participants planted one plant each along a portion of the Buri planting site. The remaining 1,540 plantlets shall be planted in the Buri

continued on page 4...

Manobo Tribe for sustainable Abaca production

OIC-Director Clarito M. Barron (PhilFIDA) together with the La Paz, Agusan del Sur Mayor Ambrosio Lim (LGU) and the Manobo Indigenous Cultural Communities of Agusan (MICCA) Chairperson Merlyn Cuguit-Hernandez and President Pedro Francisco O. Hernandez signed a Memorandum of Agreement for the sustainable and efficient plantation of existing indigenous abaca of MICCA in La Paz, Agusan del Sur. The MOA signing was held at the PhilFIDA central office on 10 March 2016.

According to Director Barron, "this development gives realization to the agency's goal of uplifting the living condition of the farmers through increased farmers' income from abaca fiber production."

"We should put up a weaving center so that the farmers would not only learn to extract fiber from abaca but also to weave the fiber into fabric. This would serve as source of

The San Isidro Upland Farmers Multipurpose Cooperative (SIUFMULCO)

Twenty seven years ago, seventy eight farmers organized themselves together through abaca farming, who benefited from various government programs, now operates their own Grading and Baling Establishment (GBE) located at San Isidro, Santiago, Agusan del Norte.

With over 144 hectares of mostly hilly and rolling land areas in San Isidro, SIUFMULCO continues to grow. Starting from nothing, the cooperative and its members had amassed over P6 million in total assets while keeping a net surplus of more than P1.52 million and a paid-up capital of P1.80 million.

additional income for the people," Barron added.

This project aims to optimize production volume and market prices for abaca fiber within the ancestral domain of MICCA through expansion and creation of higher density abaca plantation that is managed according to sustainable plantation practices. Simultaneous with the harvesting and stripping of matured abaca, farmers shall plant seedlings harvested from their own plantation for continuous abaca cultivation. The parties agreed that PhilFIDA shall provide the technical assistance on abaca fiber production, marketing and processing while the LGU shall help in the plantation management, harvesting, fiber extraction, grading and classification. Along with PhilFIDA's technical assistance is the introduction of the technology of mechanized stripping of abaca through the use of FIDA-designed mobile spindle stripping machine which will replace the hand blades being used by the farmers. 🌱

Presently, the cooperative expects about P2 million yearly income from the buying and selling of abaca fibers, the cooperative's major business. Many big buyers are interested and offer more incentives for their raw abaca fibers but SIUFMULCO's major market is the Specialty Pulp Manufacturing, Inc. (SPMI) of Baybay, Leyte.

The cooperative also operates two big sari-sari stores that have served basic goods to the members and non-members residing in San Isidro. The stores provide an annual income of P1 million to the members of the cooperative.

As part of its service to its members, SIUFMULCO offers cash loans with low interest rate. It also

BLGU supports revival of abaca fiber production in Dingalan, Aurora

The municipality of Dingalan, Aurora has potential land area of approximately 100 hectares that could be planted with abaca. Fiber production reaches to 3-5 metric tons per month in year 2013. However, due to calamities, diseases, fiber recession, and low price of abaca fibers in the local market, the production has declined.

To revitalize abaca fiber production in the municipality, PhilFIDA Region IV in collaboration with the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Dingalan-Aurora through the municipal agriculturist office (MAO) headed by Zenia Q. Abaya, Baranggay Local Government Unit (BLGU) of Matawe, and the facilitation of abaca local trader at Dingalan, Aurora, provision of 15 pieces traditional stripping knives (TSK) and 15 pieces tuxying knives were distributed to 15 abaca farmers/strippers.

continued on page 4...

offers a lesser rental cost for the use of stripping machines to all members. The cooperative has generated employment for abaca classifiers, cutters and balers and the members are also given priority in the acquisition of these jobs.

In 1989, initially fifteen abaca farmers started to work together and named its group as San Isidro Upland Farmers' Organization (SIUFO). The group eventually grew and went through registration as a cooperative at the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) on January 19, 1998.

In 2011, some challenges were faced by the cooperative particularly low abaca fiber price and strong competition from other abaca fiber traders. These made their volume of production and income to reduce at a

continued on page 4...

The San Isidro...from page 3
remarkable level. The management prompted to shift their marketing strategy, went beyond their surrounding markets and were able to tap the SPMI pulping plant in Baybay, Leyte which made them initially prepare a minimum monthly fiber delivery of 20 metric tons.

As a cooperative and abaca producer, SIUFMULCO has made a name of its own and carved a niche in the agriculture sector of the Caraga Region as a successful cooperative advocating for sustainable and ecologically sound farm practices with each member and their families working toward a productive and sustainable community.

The SIUFMULCO received financial assistance from government programs through the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Philippines-Australia Community Assistance Program (PACAP), Upland Development Programme (UDP), Mindanao Rural Development Program (MRDP) and Community-Based Forest Management - Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CBFM-CARP). 🌿

PhilFIDA distributes...from page 2

(PCIC), Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) and Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) also participated in the event and handed-out production materials to their respective clientele. 🌿

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Front Picture: silkworms and cocoons at the PhilFIDA Silk Processing Center in Wangal, Benguet

BLGU supports...from page 3

Also, a skills training on abaca fiber stripping, grading and classification to 35 farmers and strippers including senior citizens, youth, women and BLGU was conducted. Through focus group discussion (FGD), the farmers/strippers gave their views on the situation of abaca farming in Dingalan in terms of the opportunities, strengths, weaknesses and threats. They also provided recommendations on how the abaca industry in their province could be further improved particularly on fiber quality, marketing and the strategies/solutions that would help enhance abaca-related projects.

As part of the collaborative efforts, MAO Abaya assured their commitment to support the fiber industry in the locality. Barangay Captain Mercedita N. Escubido has confirmed that they were plans to include abaca programs in the Bottoms—Up—Budgeting (BUB) of BLGU, Matawe Dingalan.

PhilFIDA Region IV will facilitate the organization of farmers and their registration at the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) to strengthen the group of abaca farmer/stripper of Dingalan. In addition, Mr. Jimmy E. Abat, registered local abaca trader in Brgy. Matawe pledged to re-activate his activities on fiber market production and marketing.

Also, in order to facilitate the funding

and extension of different projects and programs for the abaca industry of Dingalan, in supervision of PhilFIDA Region IV, Matawe Abaca Farmers Association (MAFA) was established. 🌿



Ms. Mary Ann L. Pedrosa, Senior Fiber Development Officer of the Fiber Utilization & Technology Division received a Loyalty Award from OIC Executive Director Clarito Barron during the agency's monthly general assembly held last 07 March 2016. Ms. Pedrosa has rendered another 5 years of continuous and satisfactory service in the PhilFIDA on 02 January 2016 making her reach a total of 35 years of service in the government. 🌿

PhilFIDA plants...from page 2

production area by the staff of the station headed by Mr. Rogelio Chakiton. The PRS, having an area of 18.8 hectares, has in it included production areas for different kinds of fibers in its development plan where Buri production is yet to be started. 🌿



The PhilFIDA joined the Bureau of Plant Industry's (BPI) 86th Anniversary Celebration through a friendly basketball match last 19 January 2016. The PhilFIDA team was headed by Director Clarito Barron and was composed of 21 players who displayed powerful ball skills to win the game. 🌿