EVENT BRIEF

Small farms and family farms are not determined by size. However, according to the latest Census of Agriculture of the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), the Philippines has 5.56 million farms/holdings covering 7.19 million hectares. This means that the average size of a farm in the Philippines, mostly small-scale family farms, is 1.29 hectares.

An even more interesting fact is that of the total 5.56 million farms, 38% are under half a hectare.

The 2nd National Small and Family Farmers/New and Beginning Farmers Conference brings together stakeholders of a very important yet often neglected segment of our agricultural industry – the family farms and small farms.

IS SMALL FARM A REAL FARM?

In the development of the agricultural industry and the focus on commercial farming, many have neglected that farming traces its origin to small-scale family farming. People used to grow their own food and for its immediate community. The growth of commercial farming is good but there is nothing wrong in the continuous cultural practice of subsistence farming.

New generations of small and family farms prefer to produce food that has ecological, social, and economic integrity. New generations of small and family farms are intentional multifunctional farmers. They use their farm as their home, their food production area, their recreation area, their school, and more.

The aim of this conference is to promote the creation of systems of farming capable of maintaining their productivity and usefulness to the community. The central theme is how to mobilize our small and family farmers/new and beginning farmers for food security, sustainable tourism, and rural development.
WHAT IS A SMALL FARM AND WHAT IS A FAMILY FARM?

John Ikerd, author of the book *Small Farms are Real Farms*, said that a “true family farm represents a way of life rather than just a means of making an economic living.” Family farming is the typical operational farming model we have in the Philippines. It is passed down from one family generation to others. It is the major contributor to the socioeconomic life in most rural areas.

THE PAMILYANG FILIPINO FARMER AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVE

One of the outputs of last year's conference is the formation of a national organization of family farms in the Philippines. Registration for the Pamilyang Filipino Farmers Agricultural Cooperative is still ongoing.

Cooperatives play a significant role in poverty reduction. It contributes significantly to rural development. The Pamilyang Filipino Farmers upholds the tradition of family farming and leads each one to cooperatively work with each other.

LIMITED CONFERENCE GRANTS AVAILABLE

The Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA) is hosting this conference. It has allotted a limited number of grants for applicants who are small farm holders with not more than 5 ha farm size; not more than 40 years old; and has convincing seriousness in pursuing farming as an occupation. The application form may be downloaded [here](#). For more information about the grant, please email Dr. Nova A. Ramos, SEARCA Program Specialist (nea@searca.org).