The newly constituted SEARCA Advisory Board convened last 20 May for the first time in Los Baños, Laguna and discussed the Center’s thrusts and efforts, in the face of the twin problems of hunger and poverty pervading the Southeast Asian region.

The SEARCA Advisory Board, composed of men and women prominent in national and international academic, scientific, and business communities, provides counsel to the Center on strategies in carrying out its mandate of strengthening institutional capacities in agricultural and rural development in Southeast Asia, toward food security and poverty reduction.

It is chaired by Prof. Solita C. Monsod, Professor of Economics at the University of the Philippines Diliman (UPD) and former Secretary of Socio-Economic Planning and Director-General of the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA). The other members are: Mr. Senen C. Bacani, President of T’boili Agro-Industrial Development, Inc. and former Secretary of the Department of Agriculture (DA); Dr. Ronald P. Cantrell, Director-General of the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI); Dr. Evamarie P. Capareda, Dean of the University of the Philippines (UPLB) Graduate School; Dr. Gelia T. Castillo, National Scientist from the National Academy of Science and Technology (NAST); Dr. Cielito F. Habito, Professor, Ateneo de Manila University (ADMU), and former Secretary of Socio-Economic Planning and Director-General of NEDA; Dr. Percy E. Sajise, Director of the Regional Office for Asia, Pacific, and Oceania, International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI), Malaysia; Dr. Saifullah Syed, Chief, Policy Assistance Branch for Asia and the Pacific, UN Food and Agriculture Organization Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (FAO-RAP), Thailand; Dr Hiroyuki Takeya, Director of the International Cooperation Center for Agricultural Education, Nagoya University, Japan; and Mr. Cesar E. A. Virata, Corporate Vice Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Rizal Commercial and Banking Corporation (RCBC) and former Prime Minister of the Philippines.

The meeting consisted of an orientation on SEARCA, followed by a thorough discussion of SEARCA’s Eighth Five-Year Plan.

The Five-Year Plan, to start in July 2004, espouses two strategic focus areas through which the Center sees itself contributing to the solution of the twin problems of food insecurity and poverty, which pervade Southeast Asia. These focus areas are Agricultural Competitiveness and Natural Resource Management.

In the meeting, the Advisory Board saw the need for SEARCA to put significant
Calls for Proposals were announced in their forest goods and services. Groups who show a high dependency on focuses on communities and indigenous funding. The SGP PTF most especially access to traditional sources of donor initiatives, which might not normally have responsiveness to community-based As such it allows greater flexibility and little central handling of project proposals. And is strongly decentralized with very facility is based on country-led initiatives of Asia. This unique grant resources of Asia. To date a total of 28 projects have been approved across the region. Participants in this second regional meeting evaluated the progress of the SGP PTF and shared lessons learned from across the region since implementation of this facility. They also visited some of the community group project sites on Palawan currently funded by both the SGP PTF and GEF SGP programmes.

For more information on the SGP PTF and for in-country contact details, please refer to the SGP PTF website at www.sgpptf.org.

S. Hagedorn and SEARCA Director Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan look on.

Miss Deborah Landey, resident representative of UNDP, is shown signing documents during the second regional meeting of the UNDP-managed SGP-PTF in Palawan, while Puerto Princesa Hon. Mayor Edward S. Hagedorn and SEARCA Director Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan look on.

**Funding Facility for Community-Based Regional Tropical Forestry Meets in Palawan**

The European Commission (EC)-funded, United Nations Development Program (UNDP)-managed Small Grants Programme to Promote Tropical Forests (SGP PTF) conducted on 22 June 2004 the second regional meeting to review the programme’s efforts since its launching in seven Southeast Asian countries including the Philippines. The event was hosted by Palawan provincial and Puerto Princesa City governments.

SGP PTF is based upon and works closely with the existing Small Grant Programme, a highly successful program funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF SGP). SEARCA is its executing agency. The SGP PTF provides, on a competitive basis, small grants (between Euro 20,000 to 200,000) to community-led initiatives, which have positive impacts on the forest resources of Asia. This unique grant facility is based on country-led initiatives and is strongly decentralized with very little central handling of project proposals. As such it allows greater flexibility and responsiveness to community-based initiatives, which might not normally have access to traditional sources of donor funding. The SGP PTF most especially focuses on communities and indigenous groups who show a high dependency on their forest goods and services.

Calls for Proposals were announced in Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam in January 2003. Start up activities of the SGP PTF are well underway in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Sri Lanka, and Calls for Proposals are planned in these three countries in September 2004. The response to Calls for Proposals has in many cases been overwhelming indicating the strong awareness and demand by local communities to manage and preserve their precious forest resources. To date a total of 28 projects have been approved across the region.

**BRP Presents Papers on Biodiversity at 7th ICOPHIL**

Staff and researchers of the Biodiversity Research Programme (BRP) for Development in Mindanao took part in the 7th International Conference on Philippine Studies (ICOPHIL) held last 16-19 June 2004 in Leiden, The Netherlands. With the theme, "Changing Landscapes, Humanescapes, and Mindscapes in a Globalizing World", the conference aimed to provide a forum for scholars from various parts of the world engaged in research on Philippine society, culture, economy, and environment, and to promote scholarship that does not remain inside the walls of the academy, but would contribute to policy making for sustainable development.

BRP is a collaborative research programme on biodiversity management and conservation funded by the Netherlands Ministry for Development Cooperation (DGIS) through SEARCA.

Dr. Perry S. Ong, Chair of the BRP Joint Programme Committee (JPC) presented a paper on "The State of Philippine Biodiversity: Changing Mindscapes Amidst the Crisis". Dr. Mariliza V. Ticsay, Coordinator of the BRP National Support Secretariat presented a paper on "Collaborative North-South Research Partnerships” highlighting BRP experiences and lessons learned.

Likewise, researchers from Mindanao partner institutions presented papers highlighting BRP research results, namely: "Participatory Biodiversity Assessment in Malindang Range, Philippines"; "Participatory Biodiversity Assessment in the Coastal Areas of Northern Mt. Malindang, Philippines"; "Participatory Biodiversity Inventory and Assessment of Lake Duminagat, Mt. Malindang Natural Park"; "Impact of Selected Policies on the Biodiversity Management and Conservation in Mt. Malindang and its Environments"; and "Resource Utilization Patterns in the Terrestrial Ecosystem in Mt. Malindang and its Environments".

This international scientific conference is held every four years alternately in the Philippines and other continents. The 7th ICOPHIL was organized by the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), Leiden University, The Netherlands. (CSFule)

**SEARCA Advisory / from page 1**

light on what it has done for the region to ignite change or even change lives. This, they assessed, would lead to constant self-evaluation, which in turn leads to improvement. The Center was also advised to focus squarely on areas where it is perceived to have an edge or will have an impact, such as agricultural competitiveness, biotechnology, food safety, and water.

The Advisory Board’s assessments will serve as input into the laying of the groundwork for the forthcoming implementation of the Eighth Five-Year Plan. With this development, it is hoped that the strategic focus areas of Agricultural Competitiveness and Natural Resource Management will be operationalized and their corresponding objectives achieved. (AJTAragon)
SEARCA Studies
Livestock Waste Pollution of South China Sea

Agricultural waste ranks second as the largest land-based source of marine pollution according to the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and Global Environmental Facility (GEF). In East and Southeast Asia, a major part of these wastes come from livestock production, particularly swine and poultry. With more than half of the world’s population of hogs and more than one-third of poultry raised in East Asia, and most of their waste eventually ending up in the South China Sea, questions on how best to manage waste pollution in this section of Asia have been raised.

A five-year regional study to address this concern is being conducted by GEF, World Bank, and Food and Agriculture Organization / Livestock, Environment and Development Initiative (FAO/LEAD). Entitled “Livestock Waste Management in East Asia”, the study covers Thailand, Vietnam, and the Guangdong Province of China. SEARCA is coordinating the environmental baseline study on the migration of nutrients, particularly nitrogen and phosphorus, from livestock wastes to the South China Sea.

Based on the study’s results, recommendations for the design of an environmental mitigation and monitoring plan will be submitted to FAO/LEAD.

Dr. Rodrigo Badayos and Prof. Moises Dorado, University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) faculty and SEARCA’s consultants in the project, recently attended a workshop in Vietnam to meet with FAO’s international consultants regarding the conduct of the baseline study. Dr. Badayos looks into the migration of nutrients through the soil, while Prof. Dorado studies migration through water channels. Jointly, they will estimate the relative share of agriculture wastes (e.g., manure) in total inland sources of nutrients. Both experts are working closely with local consultant teams from China, Thailand and Vietnam as well as FAO/LEAD’s consultants.

Once results of the survey are gathered, the SEARCA team, in coordination with the other consultants, will come up with the criteria for the selection of farms and production villages for the proposed project intervention in the three countries. (VTMLedesma)

32 Indonesian
Rural Dev’t
Workers Complete
Study Tour

They came. They observed. They learned.

In a nutshell, this was the general sentiment of the 32 Indonesian officials from the Directorate General of Community and Village Empowerment (DGCVE), Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA). They were participants of a study tour, the first of three batches, conducted from 11 to 24 April 2004, which is part of a project called the Community Empowerment for Rural Development (CERD).

The study tour took the 32 Indonesian officials to different provinces in Vietnam and Thailand. SEARCA, through its Training Department and Consulting Services Department, coordinated with the SEAMEO Regional Training Center (RETRAC) in Vietnam and the Community Development Department (CDD) of the Ministry of Interior in Thailand to implement the tour. The participants were accompanied by members of the SEARCA Training Management Group, namely: Dr. Alicia P. Occidental, Study Tour Technical Coordinator; Dr. Wilfredo H. Libunao, Co-Coordinator; and Ms. Dina C. Magnaye and Ms. Nova A. Ramos, Training Management Assistants.

To address the poverty problem among the majority of its people, the Indonesian government enacted Laws 22 and 25. These decentralization laws of the government serve as enabling instruments that address regional economic disparities through the conversion of Indonesia’s districts into autonomous areas possessing fully elected government authority that represents the interest of their rural constituencies.

Based on these laws, the DGCVE is mandated to support and facilitate community development and coordinate with local government and sector agencies in implementing programs. The MOHA is tasked to reorient and retrain DGCVE staff at the central level and devolved staff at the district levels. Since the new responsibilities entrusted to these staff are beyond their current capabilities, the MOHA conceived and developed the CERD Project. This Short-term Overseas Comparative Studies falls under the Capacity Building for Decentralized Development Planning Component of the CERD Project.

As part of the water resources and soil development activities, the Huai Sai Royal Development Study Center in Cha-am District, Phetchaburi Province, Thailand, cultivates vetiver grass in gullies, on contours, and at the bottom of fruit trees to help prevent soil erosion and increase soil moisture. One of the CERD Study Tour participants tries to drill a peg to test the porosity of the soil.
Domestic creditors so that it would pay. Considering the local deficit, however, were also cited as means for agro-issue, and calibrating the tariff protection. Establishing long-term fund, increasing credit access, resolving the coconut levy, breaking local port monopolies, the agrarian reform implementation, providing basic infrastructures, reviewing sector as forerunners of development.

**Former Agric Official Points Path to Progress**

Aptly titled Quo Vadis: Philippine Agriculture, the Fourth JD Drilon Jr. Agribusiness Lecture Series was held in SEARCA last 14 June, where keynote speaker, former Agriculture Secretary Senen C. Bacani, recounted the decline of the agricultural sector’s performance and how it can be revived.

Mr. Bacani showed how the government has under-invested in agriculture over the past decade. He explained that the country used to be a net agricultural exporter, contrary to what it is today. Moreover, he noted that private investment in agriculture has come in trickles because of the haphazard implementation of agrarian reform and the prevailing peace and order situation. “This, among others, explains why after a decade, we are still talking about the same problems,” he said.

In order for the Philippines to catch up with its neighbors, Mr. Bacani asserted that the nation should undergo agro-industrialization to effectively drive the growth of other industries. This would entail the participation of the business sector as forerunners of development. Providing basic infrastructures, reviewing the agrarian reform implementation, breaking local port monopolies, establishing long-term fund, increasing credit access, resolving the coconut levy issue, and calibrating the tariff protection were also cited as means for agro-industrialization.

Considering the local deficit, however, Mr. Bacani boldly suggested that the Philippines negotiate with foreign and domestic creditors so that it would pay just half of the interest payments in the next two to three years, with the balance capitalized as part of the principal. This way, an additional P150 billion per year can be used for the agriculture and fisheries sector to make the country more competitive and attractive for investments. Once the private sector sees that serious steps are undertaken in addressing agricultural constraints, it will then venture into the countryside. When investments start pouring in, development follows, and naturally, peace and order come after. In essence, Mr. Bacani told the audience that private sector investment would help trigger the broad-based development so crucial to the nation’s progress.

The annual lecture also served as the SEARCA Agriculture and Development Seminar Series for the week. The reactors, Dr. Patricio Faylon, Executive Director of the Philippine Council for Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCARRD), and Dr. Leonardo Gonzales, President of SIKAP/STRIVE Foundation, Inc, provided additional insights.

**SEARCA Churns Out Three New Publications**

SEARCA has churned out three new publications.

**SEARCA Agriculture and Development Discussion Paper Series.** Gracing the first issue is “Averting Hunger and Food Insecurity in Asia”, the keynote paper presented by SEARCA Director Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan at the Regional Workshop on Policy Issues and Options to Avert Hunger and Food Insecurity in Asia held in Cha-am, Thailand, on 24-26 March 2004. The Discussion Paper Series was created to disseminate information on current issues to inspire discussion between the author and other stakeholders.

**Challenges for Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resources Management in Vietnam Uplands: A Case Study.** This monograph showcases land use transformation, global market influences, and policy implications. It is the final output of the Natural Resource Management Program’s project, “Adapting and Transferring Lessons Learned from Manupail to Other Critical Watersheds in Southeast Asia”.

**Enabling Policies for Sustainable Agriculture: Legislative Imperatives, which contains highlights of last year’s Third JD Drilon Jr. Agribusiness Lecture, is now available for free. This proceeding, where Hon. Franklin M. Drilon, Senate President of the Philippines, was keynote speaker, focused on the importance of having a policy environment conducive to sustainable agricultural development. (RNAForonda)**

**SEARCA Director in Canada for Ecosystem Assessment Group Meeting**

SEARCA Director Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan was in Quebec, Canada last 25-30 April, to attend the Combined Working Group Meeting of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) Review Board, of which he was appointed member in February 2004.

The MA is an international work program designed to meet the needs of decision makers and the public for scientific information concerning the consequences of ecosystem change for human well-being and options for responding to those changes. It was launched by United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Kofi Annan in June 2001 to help meet assessment needs of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Convention to Combat Desertification, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, and the Convention on Migratory Species, as well as needs of other users in the private sector and civil society.

The MA focuses on the benefits people obtain from ecosystems, how changes in ecosystem services have affected human well-being, how ecosystem changes may affect people in future decades, and
**SEARCA Director Speaks on Hunger, Poverty, and the Impact of Population on Asia's Economic Growth**

SEARCA Director Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan is spearheading the Center’s pursuit of leading discussions on emerging development issues and concerns, as he presented several papers on hunger, poverty, population, and economic growth in Asia, at various local and international seminars and fora.

Dr. Balisacan presented the negative and significant impact of high population levels on economic growth when he presented the paper "Population-Growth-Poverty Nexus" at the forum "Tracing the Path from Population to Poverty" held at the University of the Philippines Diliman (UP Diliman) in Quezon City on 16 April 2004.

The series of fora, a roadshow funded by the Philippine Center for Population and Development, Inc. (PCPD) and implemented by the Asia Pacific Policy Center (APPC), brings the issue of population vis-à-vis economic growth across the Philippines, with Dr. Balisacan as the resource person. From Quezon City in Metro Manila, it was replicated in Cebu City on 25 June, and will be held in Davao City on 30 July, while plans to hold the forum in Baguio City are underway.

On 5 May 2004, Dr. Balisacan presented the paper "Hunger and Food Insecurity in Asia: Policy Issues and Research Challenges" at a seminar at the Economics Department of the University of Hawaii, where he obtained his PhD in Economics. The same paper sparked healthy discussion of policy challenges in relation to poverty when it was presented by Dr. Balisacan at the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) weekly Thursday seminar in Los Baños, Laguna, on 17 June.

Dr. Balisacan will also discuss the negative correlation of population and economic growth on 27 July, at the weekly SEARCA Agriculture and Development Seminar Series (ADSS) where he is the featured speaker. The weekly forum, since it was launched in August last year, has been a venue for dynamic and vibrant discussion of scientific findings, research results and perspectives within the purview of agriculture and development, and has had high-profile researchers and practitioners from the academe, government, and industry as resource persons. Open to the public and held at the Center every Tuesday, the ADSS is attended by students, academics, scientists and other members of the Los Baños community and beyond. The list of the most recent speakers in the SEARCA ADSS is available at http://www.searca.org. (AJTAragon)

**Workshop Highlights Biotec Communication**

Professionals, media practitioners and heads of biotechnology information centers from Asia, Africa, Europe and South America gathered at the Asian Institute of Management (AIM) last 30 March for a “Seminar-Workshop on Managing Communications in Agricultural Biotechnology”.

Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan is flanked by Professor Dennis Mapa and Miss Rosemarie Edillon, at the “Tracing the Path from Population to Poverty” at the Eduardo Aboitiz Development Center in Cebu City.

The Philippine Council for Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCARRD), Philippine Agricultural Journalists, Inc. (PAJ), Philippine Federation of Rural Broadcasters (PFRB), Philippine Association of Science Journalists (Pcjourn), and SEARCA Biotechnology Information Center sponsored the seminar-workshop to discuss experiences in biotech communication that will help hone effective communication skills and strategies to stakeholders.

The morning session of the seminar-workshop was devoted to a series of presentations in message development, communication styles, and radio- and newspaper-based outreach techniques. An overview of the Philippine media coverage on agri-biotech, the Asian consumer perspective on biotech-derived foods, and the communication distortion in the print media were some of the highlights. Among those who gave presentations were Dr. Mariechel Navarro, Manager of the Global Knowledge Center on Crop Biotechnology; Ms. Georgina Cairns, Executive Director of the Asian Food Information Center (AFIC); Mr. Louie Tabing, veteran broadcaster and Board Member, PFRB; Ms. Christine Gaylican of the Philippine Daily Inquirer and Board Member, PAJ; and Mr. Edwin Paraluman, Coordinator, Asian Farmers Regional Network (AFRN), and President of the Sarranggani Integrated Irrigators Association (SIIA).

In the afternoon, a focused group discussion was conducted, which tackled the possible formation of a biotech information resource network. It was envisioned that the network would act as a singular window to medical, industrial, and agricultural biotechnology information. (RNAForonda)
The comparative study is designed to enhance the capability of 90 officials recruited and selected by the CERD Project. These officials are divided into three batches, with each batch further divided into two groups consisting of 15 members each. The comparative study generally aims to widen the horizons of the participants by observing and closely studying various ways of decentralized development activities, community development planning, financial intermediation services and community-based savings and loan organization formation, and micro-enterprise development.

For the first batch of participants, a pre-departure briefing was held on 10 April 2004 at the Mahardja Hotel in Jakarta, Indonesia. The agenda included the schedule of activities, projects/institutions to be visited, course requirements, and other technical, administrative, and logistical matters. Key officials of MOHA and DGCVE, SEARCA Deputy Director for Programs Djoko Suprapto, SEARCA Training Manager Jesus C. Fernandez, and the 32 study tour participants attended the pre-departure briefing.

In Vietnam and Thailand, In-Country Coordinators were hired to facilitate and coordinate arrangements of the institutional and project visits. To enhance understanding of the host countries’ cultures, visits to cultural and historical sites were also included.

The Vietnam leg (11 - 17 April 2004) included the visit to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development; Sub-Institute of Agricultural Engineering and Postharvest Technology; College of Management for Agriculture and Rural Development; Community Development Models in Thai Mi and Phu Hao Dong Communes; Microfinance/Microcredit Models at Districts 1, 2, and 4 in Ho Chi Minh City; and Committee on Hunger Eradication and Poverty Reduction Fund Office.

The Thailand leg (18 - 24 April 2004) enabled the participants to visit the following: Chiratalada Palace (Agro-Industry Research Center under the King’s supervision); Community Development Department; Pathum Than Royal Museum Project; Thalaad Thai Agricultural Market; Floating Agricultural Market; Ratchaburi Community Enterprise Center; Tanaosri Women Network Group; Hua Sai Royal Project Development Center; Sornarai Ramie Handicraft Group; and Tunt Kled Savings Group.

At the end of the tour, the participants turned in action plans for the seven districts where they come from. The plans are expected to be implemented upon their return to their respective work stations. These action plans include the following: Community Empowerment and Rural Development Project (Banjar Project); Improving Community Health Services (Kapuas Group); Kecamatan Community Development Program (Bolaang Mangondo Group); 4) Road Construction in Poso (Poso Group); 5) Short-term Training for Staff of VED-SEP (Kendari Group); Road Building (Tahau Laut Group); and 7) Rehabilitation of 80 Poor Households in Four Villages in Pasir District, Year 2004 (Pasir Group).

Upon return to Indonesia, the participants were required to attend a debriefing session on 25 April 2004 at Hotel Maharani in Jakarta, where the participants presented group reports detailing the learnings that they gained during the two-week study tour. The activity was attended by key CERD Officials; Mr. Manuel Montemayor, Asian Development Bank (ADB) Consultant; and Dr. Occidental. (NARamos)

### Community Gardens in Misamis Occ. Help Conserve Trees

Residents of three barangays (villages) in Mt. Malindang are working together with the Biodiversity Research Programme (BRP) and the local government to conserve and propagate endemic forest trees.

With the help of BRP researchers, the villagers of Barangays Mansawan, Gandawan, and Lake Duminagat in the municipality of Don Victoriano in Misamis Occidental have jointly put up plant nurseries and commercial gardens where they will raise seedlings of fast-growing and locally endangered forest tree species. They will then sell the seedlings to local tourists visiting Lake Duminagat who, in turn, will plant the seedlings along the forest trails. Lake Duminagat is an ecotourism destination in Mt. Malindang.

According to Dr. Jose B. Arances, BRP researcher from Central Mindanao University, this activity is an offshoot of a previous floral survey in the area. The floral survey yielded an inventory and assessment of the different plant species including rare, economically important, endangered, and locally threatened ones. Part of their research output became the basis for coming up with this participatory community activity.

"The community gardens are envisioned to provide income for the villagers, and to encourage the people to replant trees and conserve their forest", said Dr. Cecilia B. Amoroso, BRP Project Leader. She is lobbying for an ordinance that will make obligatory the planting of seedlings by all visitors in the area.

Right now, the BRP monitors the activity. Measures are being taken to prepare the communities for the eventual turn over of the full management of the community garden to them when the project terminates next year. (VTMLedesma)
Filipino Prof Chair Holder Tackles Grassland Rehab

Dr. Leonardo M. Florece, Associate Professor, School of Environmental Science and Management, University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB), delivered a lecture titled “Determinants of Successful Grassland Rehabilitation in the Philippines,” on 17 June 2004.

According to Dr. Florece, reforestation of grasslands and other marginal areas in the country has been an important development agenda of the Philippine government since the 1970s to improve their productivity and ecological integrity. He said the issue of environmental degradation and food security can be addressed with appropriate and testable rehabilitation strategies. However, for the past decades, rehabilitation of these areas has been very slow because of the hostile nature of the environment coupled with social, technical, financial, administrative, and political constraints.

Dr. Florece conducted a study that documented and analyzed three modes of reforestation governance, namely: reforestation by administration, and community-based and private/family reforestation. His study showed that reforestation by administration is the preferred mode among the staff of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) for continuous protection and maintenance activities, and proper monitoring and evaluation of established plantations. Nevertheless, he said “reforestation by private individuals must also be given emphasis to ease the financial burden on the part of the government, but land tenure security must be assured, including access to future wood projects.”

In his lecture, Dr. Florece presented the biophysical, social, political, economic/financial, and technical factors that determined the success or failure of grassland reforestation.

The biophysical factors included competing plants, diseases, pests, other animals, and man, while the physical factors were soil acidity, proper timing of planting, use of drought-resistant species, and mulching.

The social factors for success included unity and awareness among members of people’s organizations, acceptability of reforestation project to the community, and local people’s participation in the project.

The political factors included endorsement of local officials, coordination of the DENR with the local government unit (LGU), and infrastructure and financial support from the LGU.

The economic/financial factors identified by DENR staff included timely release of funds for reforestation, adequate funds for reforestation, and financial transparency.

Findings of Dr. Florece’s study showed that technical and managerial capabilities are not primary requirements for successful rehabilitation efforts as initiatives by private individuals in making productive abandoned or marginal lands abound in the uplands. However, DENR staff expressed that proper training of project staff is the most important technical factor for an agroforestry project to succeed.

Dr. Florece’s study showed that “despite the infertility of grasslands, successful reforestation could be achieved under any mode of reforestation governance as long as the people involved have diligence, patience, and commitment to achieve common objectives.”

He said successful rehabilitation could be achieved even with limited forestry knowledge and financial support does not always guarantee local participation as experienced by community-based and family initiatives. He stressed, however, that social protection or community organizing must be properly instituted.

(LLDDomingo)

SEARCA Official / from page 8

On the other hand, Dr. Thong, Professor, Nong Lam University in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, presented a paper on the “Education System on Economic Management in Vietnam”. It discusses the re-orientation of the education system in Vietnam toward more innovative, open, flexible styles needed to adapt to the rapid global technological developments. His paper looks into how Vietnam’s education system reflects the process of economic reform that the country is undergoing, and probes how it increases its relevance and effectiveness.

The participation of the SEARCA fellows was funded by SEARCA and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD).

(LLDDomingo)

SEARCA Manager Serves as Visiting Prof at Nagoya University

Dr. Editha C. Cedicol, Manager of SEARCA’s Graduate Scholarship Department (GSD), was in Nagoya, Japan from 1 April to 30 June 2004 to serve as Visiting Professor at the International Cooperation Center for Agricultural Education (ICCAE), Nagoya University in coordination with the Graduate School of Bioagricultural Sciences, Nagoya University.

Dr. Cedicol’s Visiting Professor Program focused on the second stage of the curriculum development and e-learning project of Nagoya University and the Association of Asian Agricultural Colleges and Universities (AAACU), which involves the review and identification of strong programs in the agriculture curricula of participating AAACU members and the construction of the initial drafts of catalogues of courses and faculty and the information bulletin of the first batch of e-Learning Courses and Faculty in AAACU.

Dr. Cedicol also served as counterpart professor of Professor Tetsuo Matsumoto of ICCAE in the online course module development and pilot co-teaching of the course on International Cooperation for Agricultural Sciences, which is offered at Nagoya under Special Topics, using WebCT VISTA courseware as an e-learning system.

She assisted the e-Learning Training Organizing Committee of Nagoya University in the preparation and briefing of training participants and counterpart professors from Taiwan, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Japan. She participated in the training session on application of the WebCT VISTA courseware, which will be used for the pilot e-Learning Project of Nagoya University and AAACU.

Dr. Cedicol likewise assisted the Organizing Committee in the preparation for the 15th AAACU Biennial Convention to be held at Nagoya University on 27-30 September 2004. The theme of the convention is “Development of an e-Learning System as a Tool for Distance Education in Agriculture and Bioindustry in Asia.”

Established in 1972, AAACU is a network
SEARCA Official, Fellows Attend SEAMEO-UNESCO Education Congress

Dr. Djoko Suprapto, Deputy Director for Programs, and Dr. Alexander G. Flor and Dr. Le Quang Thong, both SEARCA fellows, participated in the SEAMEO-UNESCO Education Congress and Expo held on 27-29 May 2004 in Bangkok, Thailand.

The theme of the Congress was “Adapting to Changing Times and Needs,” with the sub-themes: 1) Equity and Access to Quality Education: Road to Poverty Alleviation; 2) Openness to Change and Respect for Diversity; and 3) Technology Advancement: Impact on Culture, Peace, and Environment.

Attended by more than 800 participants from 41 countries, the Congress aimed to enhance regional and international understanding and cooperation among educators and major education stakeholders, as well as explore avenues for a better future in the areas of education, culture, and technology.

“We believe that many of the new methods, reforms, policies, and innovations discussed at this Congress have enhanced the knowledge and skills of participants in adapting to changing times and needs of education clientele and stakeholders in the region and beyond,” said Dr. Arief Sadiman, Director, SEAMEO Secretariat.

Dr. Djoko chaired the Parallel Session on Globalization and Localization.

Dr. Flor, Dean of the Faculty of Information and Communication Studies of the UP Open University (UPOU) in Los Baños, Laguna, Philippines, presented a paper titled “Localized Competencies in a Globalized Educational Environment”. His paper analyzes globalization and localization not from the geopolitical perspective, but from the standpoint of what he calls “technological determinism,” wherein globalization is seen as the natural consequence of information and communication technologies (ICTs). Dr. Flor’s paper asserts that the competencies required of individuals to lead in a globalized society can be found in the emerging discipline of knowledge management. His paper also delves on the impact of shifting educational paradigms to current curricular initiatives aimed at achieving localized competencies in a global educational environment.

SEARCA Has 6 New Fellows, 7 New Scholars

Six SEARCA scholars from Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines completed their graduate studies at the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) in April 2004.

These new graduates are now referred to as SEARCA fellows. They and their graduate degrees, areas of specialization, and titles of theses/dissertations are: Mr. Freddy Pattiselanno, Indonesian, MS in Animal Science, Assessment of Rusa Deer (Cervus timorensis Muller and Schlegel) “Utilization in Upland Kebar Grassland, West Papua, Indonesia”; Ms. Patcharasan Rujipayanon, Thai, PhD in Soil Science, “Solution Aluminum of Acid Soils in Relation to Root Growth and Yield of Corn”; Ms. Jessica M. Rustia, Filipino, MS in Food Science, “Spray-drying of Tomato”; Mr. Rodelio F. Subade, Filipino, PhD in Environmental Science, “Economic Valuation for Biodiversity Conservation of Tubbataha Reefs National Marine Park and World Heritage Site, Sulu Sea, Philippines”; Mr. Jaime Silvestre, Filipino, PhD in Plant Pathology, “Performance of Corn-based Farmer-Scientists Research, Development, and Extension Training Program at the Farmers’ Field School in Cebu Province, Philippines”; and Mr. Luu Tien Thuan, Vietnamese, MS in Agribusiness Management, “A Study of the Pig and Pork Commodity Systems in Cantho Province, Vietnam”.

To date, SEARCA has a total of 931 fellows (537 MS, 395 PhD) from Brunei Darussalam (1), Cambodia (18), Indonesia (240), Lao PDR (11), Malaysia (55), Myanmar (5), the Philippines (274), Singapore (4), Thailand (259), and Vietnam (64).

On the other hand, SEARCA has seven new scholars, six of whom began their graduate studies at UPLB in the first semester of school year 2004-2005. They are Mr. Rogelio L. Padit (PhD, extension education), Mr. Nathaniel R. Alibuyog (PhD, agricultural engineering), Mr. Arturo E. Pasa (PhD, forest resource management), and Ms. Jennifer T. Peña (MS, biochemistry), all Filipinos; and Ms. Tin Mar Mar Oo and Ms. Ni Ni Tint, both Myanmar nationals, who will pursue their PhD in agronomy.

Mr. Pasuta Sunthornao (PhD, forest resource management), a Thai, will begin his graduate program in the second semester of school year 2004-2005 also at UPLB.

The new scholarship awards bring to 1,084 the total number of scholarships granted by SEARCA.

SEARCA Scholars Attend Environment Education Confab

Two SEARCA scholars, Ms. Seinn Lei Aye and Ms. Khin Myo Thant, both Myanmar nationals, participated in the Environmental Education Network of the Philippines’ National Conference and Scientific Meeting on 26-28 May 2004 at Leyte State University in Baybay, Leyte, Philippines.

The theme of the conference is “Ecogovernance for Poverty Alleviation: A Challenge for Environmental Education”. The conference aimed to give a holistic view of ecological governance as practiced by local government units, government agencies, non-government organizations (NGOs), people’s organizations, and academic institutions, focusing on information, education, and
communication (IEC) approaches and strategies. When applied to natural resource management, the function of governance can be the judicious use of controls over access and social and political conditions.

The conference brought together representatives from the government, private sector, civil society, and the academe, who presented and discussed their latest research and development efforts on onecological governance.

Ms. Aye is pursuing her PhD in environmental science, while Ms. Thant is pursuing her MS in agronomy, both at the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB). *(LLDDomingo)*

**SEARCA Fellows Participate in the SEAMEO Alumni Forum**

Three SEARCA fellows attended the SEAMEO Alumni Forum held in Bangkok, Thailand on 28 May 2004. Organized by the SEAMEO Secretariat as an adjunct activity to the SEAMEO-UNESCO Education Congress and Expo (see related article on previous page).

The SEARCA fellows who participated in the SEAMEO Alumni Forum are Dr. Alexander G. Flor and Dr. Samuel T. Mancebo, both Filipinos, and Dr. Le Quang Thong, Vietnamese.

The theme of the SEAMEO Alumni Forum was "SEAMEO and Its Alumni: Making a Difference in Southeast Asia." Mr. Haji Abdul Ghani bin Haji Omar, Director of Information and Communication Technology, Ministry of Education of Brunei Darussalam and former Director, SEAMEO Vocational and Technical Education and Training (VOCTECH), chaired the morning session, while Dr. Corazon Dauz Sampang of SEAMEO VOCTECH chaired the afternoon session.

H.E. Pehin Dato Haji Abdul Aziz Umar, Minister of Education of Brunei Darussalam and SEAMEO Council President, gave the Opening Remarks, citing the alumni as SEAMEO's greatest resource. Noting the diversity of fields of expertise, countries, and institutions represented by the alumni, he elaborated on the potential contributions that can be made by the alumni in assisting SEAMEO in carrying out its mission.

Dr. Arifel S. Sadiman, Director, SEAMEO Secretariat, updated the SEAMEO alumni on the recent developments in the SEARCA Scholars / from page 8

**Thesis Abstract 1:**

“Comparative Evaluation of Isolation, PCR Detection and Clinico-Pathological Diagnostic Approaches in Field Cases of Mycoplasma hyopneumoniae Infection in Selected Farms of Luzon, Philippines”

Nguyen Tat Toan of Vietnam
MS in Veterinary Medicine
University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB)

A total of 46 lung tissues and 12 nasal swabs suspected to be Mycoplasma hyopneumoniae of swine (MPS) were collected from 15 pig farms in Luzon. These suspected MPS were diagnosed and confirmed using clinico-pathological methods (i.e., clinical signs, gross pathology, histopathology, bacterial isolation, and polymerase chain reaction (PCR)). Also, the sensitivity, specificity, accuracy, positive and negative predictive values of each diagnostic method was determined.

Clinical signs observed were coughing, labored breathing, pyrexia, unthrifty appearance, anorexia, and prolonged course. Gross lesions were confined to the lung and were clearly demarcated from the normal lung.

Two types of gross lesion were observed: 1) acute, which is characterized by bilateral fawn, edematous and pink, and 2) chronic, which is characterized by plum-colored, atelactatic areas of anteroventral, apical, cardiac, and diaphragmatic lobes.

The enlargement of bronchial and mediastinal lymph nodes was also seen in the infected pigs. In histopathology, peribronchial, and perivascular lymphoid hyperplasia as well as lymphoid nodule formation were found to be the mon characteristic lesions associated with Mycoplasma hyopneumoniae infection.

Mycoplasma hyopneumoniae isolation from the 46 lung samples gave 4.34 (2/46) percent positive results, while the 12 nasal swabs were all negative. In PCR identification, 17 pigs out of 34 (50%) showed positive reaction in the PCR using DNA extracted from lung tissue, while the 12 nasal swab samples subjected to PCR identification had negative results.

Among the clinico-pathological methods used in this study for MPA diagnosis, histopathology had the highest specificity, accuracy, and positive predictive value, whereas clinical signs had the lowest.

Among all methods, PCR had the highest accuracy, followed by clinical signs, gross pathology, and histopathology. Isolation is still considered the diagnostic gold standard.

**Thesis Abstract 2:**

“Extraction of Paddy Rice Field by Applying Tasselled Cap, NDVI, RVI, of Landsat TM7, A Case Study in Karawang, West Java, Indonesia”

Bountheo Hemmamy of Lao PDR
MS in Information Technology for National Resources Management
Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB)

Early prediction of paddy field area under cultivation is vital to forecasting rice production, rice consumption, rice shortage, and in policy decision-making and government budget planning, especially in countries where rice is a staple food. Many countries use the conventional technique of data collection for crop monitoring and yield estimation based on ground-based visits, farmers’ reports to village leaders, visual estimates by field officers, and a number of seeds planted per hectare. These methods are subjective, very costly, and time consuming.

The aim of this study is to extract the paddy field during rice season, use the supervised classification, the classifying NDVI, RVI and three tasselled cap (brightness, greenness, wetness).

This research used single satellite imagery, Lansat TM7 to predict paddy field based on combining methods in rice irrigation area: supervised classification of original image, supervised classification of tasselled cap transformation, rule base based on NDVI value, rule base based on RVI value, rule base based on brightness, greenness, wetness of Tasselled cap.

Pre-image processing consists of preparing image data from HDF format into ERS format, radiometric correction, and geometric correction. Study area was taken in Karawang district, Tempuran sub-district. Field survey was carried out between 15 to 21 July 2003. Data collection such as date transplanting, date harvesting was done by interviewing farmers.

The results of each method shows that the accuracies of defining paddy field are 99.74% of supervised classification in original image, 99.87% of supervised classification in Tasselled cap transformation, 97.75% of classifying paddy field by NDVI, 98.84% of classifying paddy field by RVI, 0.25% of classifying paddy field by brightness, 98.71% of classifying paddy field by greenness, 64.78% of classifying paddy field of wetness. The transformation bands such as NDVI, RVI, and DN of greenness are the fast method and the best method to identify paddy field area. Their accuracies are not less than 97%.
SEARCA Director Receives Agri-Credit Award

SEARCA Director Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan (center) is shown accepting from former DA Secretary Luis P. Lorenzo, Jr. (left) and QUEDANCOR President and CEO Mr. Nelson Buenaflor the plaque of recognition that came with the Medallion.

SEARCA Director Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan was recently conferred the QUEDANCOR Agri-Credit Achievement Medallion, in recognition of his significant involvement in the promotion, development, and strengthening of rural financing in the Philippines. The awarding ceremony was held during the recent 2004 National Celebration of Agri-Credit Week of the Quedan and Rural Credit Guarantee Corporation (QUEDANCOR) held at the Hotel Rembrandt in Quezon City, Philippines.

QUEDANCOR is the financing arm of the Philippine Department of Agriculture (DA). Its President and CEO is Mr. Nelson P. Buenaflor.

Dr. Balisacan, who is also a professor of economics at the University of the Philippines, has extensively conducted research on poverty, inequality, food security, agricultural and rural development, globalization, and political economy of policy reforms. He had served as Undersecretary of the Philippine Department of Agriculture, where he was in charge of policy and planning for the entire agriculture bureaucracy and led the country’s representation at the WTO Agriculture Negotiations in Geneva and at various APEC, ASEAN, and CAIRNS meetings.

He has also taken many advisory and consultancy roles for various institutions, including the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, United Nations agencies, and Philippine Government agencies. He held research posts abroad, including serving as Visiting Fellow at the Australian National University in Canberra, Research Fellow at the East-West Center in Honolulu, and Economist at the World Bank in Washington, D.C. He assumed the SEARCA Directorship in July 2003.

The Agri-Credit Week is a yearly observance pursuant to President Fidel V. Ramos’ Proclamation No. 152, which aims to bring national attention to the provision of adequate credit to sustain the productive endeavors of rural Filipinos. A major component of this year’s week-long celebration was the awarding of the Agri-Credit Achievement Medallion, a fitting recognition given only every two years to individuals and institutions who have made landmark contribution in the development of the country’s rural finance.

Medallion awardees this year, aside from Dr. Balisacan, are Department of Finance (DOF) Secretary Juanita Amatong, Rural Bankers’ Association of the Philippines (RBAP) President Daniel Vidal R. Arcenas, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) Governor Rafael B. Buenaventura, and BSP Monetary Board Member Melito S. Salazar, Jr. (AJTAragon)

Dr. Gil F. Saguiguit, Sr. 3 August 1921 - 23 June 2004

The “Grand Old Man” of SEARCA has passed away. Below is an article published in the December 1984 issue of this paper, on the occasion of the retirement of Dr. Gil F. Saguiguit, Sr. from the Center.

Dr. Gil F. Saguiguit, Sr., often reverently regarded as the “Grand Old Man of SEARCA” has retired as Deputy Director.

More than anybody else, he has served the Center the longest period (17 years), starting in the planning stage, establishment, and launching of SEARCA as a permanent regional center of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO). As Deputy Director, he has helped nurture SEARCA’s growth and development into a “center of excellence” in agriculture. SEARCA began operation on an interim basis in 1967 and was launched as a permanent center of SEAMEO on July 1, 1969.

Following his retirement, Dr. Saguiguit rejoined the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB), SEARCA’s host institution, where he is one of the most senior professors.

Before he was detailed at SEARCA in 1967, he served, among others, as Director of Instruction of the UPLB College of Agriculture and Chairman of the Department of Agricultural Education.

He also played a key role in the establishment of the UPLB Institute of Human Ecology (now College of Human Ecology). He eventually became the College’s first Dean (1974-80).

He has had consultant assignments under the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO, now defunct) in Thailand, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization–United Nations Development Programme (UN/FAO–UNDP) in Nepal, UN/FAO–International Bank for Rural Development (IBRD) in Greece and Thailand, US Agency for International Development (USAID) in Southeast Asia, and the Rockefeller Foundation ion Bellagio, Italy and Airlee House, Virginia, USA. All these consultancies focused on agricultural education, institutional development, and

Dr. Gil F. Saguiguit, Sr. / to page 11
Dr. Gil F. Saguiguit, Sr. / from page 10

rural development.

Dr. Saguiguit was born in Batac, Ilocos Norte, Philippines, on Aug. 3, 1921.

Following his graduation from high school, he enrolled at UPCA. His pur-suit of a college degree, however, was interrupted by World War II (he was a junior when the war broke out).

He graduated valedictorian at the Batac Rural High school (elementary department) in 1935, and valedictorian at the UP Rural High School (UPLB campus) in 1939.

He went back to college in 1945. He earned his B.S.A. degree the following year with the highest academic average (he was college scholar for six semesters) among the graduating “completion” group.

Dr. Saguiguit earned his M.S. degree from the University of Illinois in 1950 under a UP fellowship and his Ph.D. degree from the Pennsylvania State University in 1959 under a Rockefeller Foundation fellowship. He was also awarded a scholarship by the Swiss government and travel by the Rockefeller Foundation for post-doctoral training at the UN/FAO-International Labor Organization (ILO)-United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Agricultural Training Center in Zurich, Switzerland.

He was elected member of the international honor society of Phi Kappa Phi, UP chapter; the international honor society of agriculture, Gamma Sigma Delta, Penn State chapter; the professional and honorary society of education, Phi Delta Kappa; the National Research Council of the Philippines; and the Philippine Association for the Advancement of Science (PAS).

He has received a number of awards, among them the Service Award form UPLB (1977), plaque of service in the Promotion of Rural Credit from the Rural Bankers Association (Southern Luzon) and Central Bank of the Philippines (1979), Outstanding Alumnus Award for International Graduate Education and Agricultural Research Administration from the UP Rural High School (on the occasion of the school’s golden anniversary in 1979), plaque of service as professor and founding dean, College of Human Ecology (1980).

Dr. Saguiguit was proclaimed Chevalier Dans L’Ordere Des Palmes Academiques by the French Government in 1980 and decorated by the same the following years.

He was author and co-author of a number of books and technical publications.

SEARCA Completes / from page 12

2004, covered the National Capital Region (NCR), Regions 1, 5, 6, and 9, and built the capacities of 155 SRT Leaders on record keeping, business analysis and credit management.

On 29 March to 2 April 2004, 23 urban retailers and hog raisers from NCR underwent training at the Agricultural Training Institute in Los Baños, Laguna. Last 17-21 May, 23 tomato farmers from the Ilocos Region (Region 1) learned the basics of record keeping and credit management at the Mariano Marcos State University in Batac, Ilocos Norte. On 31 May to 4 June it was the turn of 32 fishermen from the Bicol Region (Region 5) to be trained, at the DA Regional Office in Camarines Norte. A total of 47 hog growers from Western Visayas (Region 6) underwent training at the Punta Villa Resort in Arenalco, Iloilo, on 14-18 June. To cap off the first phase of the program, 30 corn farmers from Northern Mindanao (Region 9) trooped to the Agricultural Training Institute in Cagayan de Oro City on 28 June to 2 July. (AJTAragon and NDBrones)

Hograisers Get / from page 12

to the swine fattening farm of Outstanding SRT Leader Mr. Erwin Baro, where they got a glimpse of the farmer’s “secrets of success” through a short interaction. Then it was on to the swine breed-ding business of another Outstanding SRT Leader, Mr. Eduardo Balajadia, where the trainees received invaluable business tips from the self-made hog farmer who has availed of QUEDANCOR’s loan programs several times. Last stop for the day was the sprawling, 288-hectare Nueva Swine Valley, QUEDANCOR’s partner in their Swine Production Loan Program, which supplies the breed and piglets to hog farmers involved in either swine breeding or fattening.

At Nueva Swine Valley, the SRT leaders were given a business operation orientation by Dr. Rey Agro, who is responsible for keeping the entire valley swine disease-free. During this activity, the trainees again received precious words of advice from one of Iloilo’s top swine producing farms, in a lively, informative question and answer setting that was held at the Nueva Valley Resthouse, situated the top of a hill and overlooking the entire vast expanse of the valley.

After the orientation, the trainees were also given the chance to tour the extremely strict swine fattening and breeding facilities at the bottom of the valley, but not before they all had to bathe and don the fresh set of clothing and footwear provided by the farm, as a precaution against disease.

The SRT leaders were back at the function room of Punta Villa Resort on the last day of the training, to draft their re-entry plan, or their concrete plan for application of the agribusiness and credit training they have received, to be put into action within the next several weeks. These action plans will be monitored for progress by a SEARCA-appointed monitoring team, and reports will be made to QUEDANCOR credit facilitators.

As with every training program where the end is always the highest point, it was a festive graduation ceremony that culminated the training program. All 47 QUEDANCOR SRT Leaders of Western Visayas, now armed with invaluable training on agribusiness and credit management, received their Certificate of Participation from SEARCA before each one went his or her way back home. (AJTAragon)

SEARCA Fellows / from page 9

organization, tracing the growth of the organization and citing the seven priority areas on which SEAMEO focuses its programs. Dr. Sadiman said SEAMEO faces two major challenges: 1) generating resources for undertaking programs and projects, and 2) enhancing the visibility of SEAMEO as a service provider for education and development in the region.

In the workshop, the alumni participants focused on the challenges mentioned by Dr. Sadiman. At the end of the workshop, the alumni recommended the following strategies to improve SEAMEO’s visibility: 1) development of a SEAMEO-wide alumni database; 2) development of an electronic newsletter for SEAMEO alumni; and 3) organizing small seminars and conferences among alumni. On the other hand, to increase SEAMEO’s resource base, the alumni suggested that revenue-raising activities and consultancy services be organized and that a special fund for marketing SEAMEO services and products be set up.

Representatives of SEAMEO regional centers were invited to share thoughts and experiences in meeting the challenges to SEAMEO. Representing the SEARCA alumni, Dr. Flor outlined knowledge management as SEAMEO’s potential specialized service niche and introduced the idea of forming a region-wide consultancy service group that could draw experts from the SEAMEO regional centers as well as from the SEAMEO alumni.

For his part, Dr. Thong served as facilitator during the workshop. Dr. Mancebo, on the other hand, was cited in Dr. Sadiman’s remarks as the “most senior” alumnus (1979) present in the Alumni Forum. (LDDomingo)
SEARCA Completes 1st Phase of 5-Year Training of QUEDANCOR SRT Leaders

SEARCA Consulting Services (ConServ), in tandem with the Center’s Training Department, recently completed the implementation of the first phase of the “Strengthening Capacity of Self-Reliant Team (SRT) Leaders of QUEDANCOR in Agri-business and Credit Management”, a five-year capability-building project funded by the Quedan and Rural Credit Guarantee Corporation (QUEDANCOR).

QUEDANCOR is an attached credit agency of the Philippine Department of Agriculture (DA). The SRT Model, brainchild of QUEDANCOR President and Chief Executive Officer Nelson C. Buenaflor, is a package of innovative, collateral-free loan, technology, and market access. It covers viable monocrop, multi-crop planting, integrated farm production activities, and other livelihood projects of self-reliant farmers/fisherfolk.

Under the SRT model, a group of 3-15 accredited farmers or fisherfolk living in the same community voluntarily form themselves into a group. They elect from among themselves a Team Leader who will primarily act as the administrative arm of QUEDANCOR, responsible for overseeing the loan and credit management of each team member. To ensure effective implementation of the lending program, QUEDANCOR trains its SRT leaders in necessary areas like leadership, project management, values formation, and credit management.

For this purpose, SEARCA was tapped by QUEDANCOR to implement a long-term capacity-building training for some 30,000 SRT Leaders from all over the Philippines over a period of five years. The first phase, which started in March

Hog raisers get glimpse of success through agricredit training

The Iloilo leg of the SEARCA-implemented “Strengthening Capacity of Self-Reliant Team (SRT) Leaders of QUEDANCOR in Agri-business and Credit Management” training program was attended by SRT Leaders who availed of QUEDANCOR’s Swine Production Loan Program in the Western Visayas area, hog farmers from the provinces of Aklan, Antique, Capiz, and Iloilo.

During the first of the five-day training program at the Punta Villa Resort in Arevalo, Iloilo City, the training participants were given an overview of the SRT model by QUEDANCOR President Buenaflor, and oriented on the characteristics, phases, and features of the credit program. Professor Jimmy B. Williams of the College of Economics and Management, University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB), zeroed in on efficient agribusiness management systems. The second day was devoted to strengthening the leadership skills of the trainees, as Dr. Felixberto H. Roquia of the De La Salle University (DLSU) spoke on developing negotiation skills and nurturing the spirit of cooperativism among SRTs. Next in line was a whole-day session on business planning and budgeting, and cash flow management, facilitated by Miss Blanquita Pantoja of the College of Public Affairs, UPLB.

After three days of classroom-style training in a well-appointed function room at the resort, it was time for the trainees to see how the theories and credit management principles ingrained in their minds would stand when applied in a real-life agribusiness setting. On the fourth day, armed with enough food and drinks to feed a small village, all 47 trainees set out for Barotac Viejo, a two-hour bus ride from Arevalo, to conduct an all-day field visit. First on the itinerary was a visit to a hog raisers operation.