A TIME TO CELEBRATE

Forty-one years of commitment to agricultural and rural development (ARD) in Southeast Asia... we have come a long way. Together with our partners, we raise a toast to another year of new triumphs and milestones as we charge forward for stronger regional cooperation toward increased institutional capacities in ARD.

CHEERS!!!

SEARCA turns 41, fetes former president

SEARCA marked its 41st Anniversary celebration with a ceremony graced by former Philippine President Fidel V. Ramos held at SEARCA’s Umali Auditorium on 27 November 2007.

Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, SEARCA Director, led the management, staff, and scholars in the celebration, which was attended by officials of institutions in the Los Baños Science Community as well as SEARCA’s partners. In his welcome remarks, Dr. Balisacan said that this [anniversary] is a very important milestone for SEARCA. Stressing the importance of celebrating the occasion, he said that “from such remembrance we can gain new inspirations to move forward, carrying our mandate of building Southeast Asia’s capacity for agricultural and rural development in order to contribute to poverty alleviation and food security.”

As SEARCA turned 41, it enriched its offerings by launching the Dioscoro L. Umali (DLU) Achievement Award for Agricultural Development. Mr. Ramos led the launch of the DLU award.
Mr. Ramos, in his keynote address, lauded SEARCA’s contributions to the region. He said that countryside development must be a centerpiece of public policy.

“We must therefore maximize the potentials of agriculture as the backbone of the Philippine development. We must build up an agricultural sector that will make us competitive not only in Southeast Asia and Northeast Asia but also in other global markets,” Mr. Ramos said.

Mr. Ramos furthered “SEARCA must also keep its collective expertise focused on agricultural policies and support system – in institutional development sustainable land and water management, conservation, biotechnology, biofuels and climate change—under the overarching concept of sustainability.”

SEARCA also conferred during the program the Seed Fund for Research and Training (SFRT) grants to the third batch of awardees. This batch has nine recipients from Indonesia (2), Lao PDR (1), Philippines (3), and Vietnam (3). (See related story on page 5).

Moreover, SEARCA recognized eight staff members with Loyalty Awards. The awardees and their years of service are:

- 20 years – Maciste B. Alegre, General Services Assistant; Marites U. Suarez, Administrative Assistant; Cirilia B. Miranda, Accounts Analyst; Elma M. Banzuela, Purchasing Assistant; Delfin T. Paz, Electrical and Equipment Technician; and
- 15 years – Eugene Philip S. Boone, Grounds and Building Supervisor; and
- 10 years – Gaspar L. de Chavez, Carpenter/Plumber; Vian-Alen S. Limbacho, Transport Services Assistant.

The event also saw the launch of SEARCA publications, namely:

- Biotechnology; Science, and Regulation of Plant Environ in Mindanao, Philippines; Effects of an Avian Influenza Outbreak; Endangered Beauty: Mt. Malindang and its Environs in Mindanao, Philippines; Southeast Asian Agriculture and Development Primer Series (Philippines – revised edition, Thailand, Vietnam and Indonesia); The AFTA-CEPT and the ASEAN-China Early Harvest Program: An Assessment of Potential Short-run Impacts (Discussion Paper Series); Policy Brief 2007 Series; and Natural Resource Management in a Globalizing Community.

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As always, it is with gladness that I welcome you to SEARCA. We are deeply grateful and appreciative of your presence as we mark this annual milestone in our life together.

Sometimes, in the flurry of activities, it is easy to forget our origins from our priorities. However, according to our aim, at SEARCA, we make a big deal of our anniversary because by remembering our past, we give ourselves the meaning of our existence and to etch in our corporate consciousness the purpose of our being. By remembering our past, we can give new meaning to our present and forward them to the generations that follow. For SEARCA, it is no different. Let us recall how we got the job done despite the challenges. Together as a family, they have done great things, giving hope to many in the Philippines and far from us as well. As a result, it reminds us of the reasons of why we exist. This anniversary is our chance to go beyond our personal efficacy and focus on the society that we serve.

SEARCA’s birth was the culmination of many months of work and commitment of thinkers and scientists from the then University of the Philippines College of Agriculture, led by its Dean, Dr. Dionisio L. Umali. Dr. Umali and his team drew up the blueprint for SEARCA’s establishment, believing that the time was ripe for Southeast Asia to take a bigger role in the development of its citizens’ capacities in addressing the regional economic and rural development concerns. Not surprisingly, Dr. Umali was appointed the first Director of SEARCA. After him came other holders of SEARCA, who steered the Center through good times and bad, tempering it to maturity so that it would stand the test of time when storms with winds buffeted the Center and tried to bring it down. But this was only the beginning. By the end, Dr. Umali’s vision has been achieved. The establishment of SEARCA is no longer just a dream; it has become a reality, and its benefits are reaping dividends from time to time.

Looking back, SEARCA’s most important event was its 20th anniversary celebration, exactly one year from today. This 21st anniversary celebration is special to at least two reasons. First, we will be launching a special project that honors the legacy and aspirations for Southeast Asia of Dr. Umali, mentor to many at UPLB and beyond. Second, this is the occasion of the man who, while in the highest office, had shown us that the ‘mission’ of this country cannot be had, and even now that he’s out of office, continues to encourage us to pursue in our hearts the hope that yes, the Philippines can be great again!

I would like to express our most sincere appreciation to the Philippine Government for its committed support to SEARCA through its hosting of our offices on UPLB campus and its financial support to the Center. We are acknowledging the presence of our partners, collaborators, and members of our networks. We thank you all for your support. SEARCA is able to move beyond what can be said by itself.

As of most of us here well know, my Administration focused a major part of its resources and energy into modernizing our country’s agricultural sector. Successful Administrations before mine had routinely treated agriculture as the “stepchild” of Philippine development. But even so, the industrial sector that some had lavished public investment—despite common people’s complaints that they are not feeling the supposed benefits of growth—are getting away!

And the reason, of course, is that sustained growth is not possible without intensive, relatively low skill industries which offer the only jobs suited to millions of our underemployed rural young people. If we are to improve the efficiency of our still impoverised economy, we must continue to make responsible development a cornerstone of public policy.

We must therefore maximize the potential of agriculture as the backbone of the Philippine development. We must build up an agricultural sector that will make us competitive not only in Southeast Asia and Northeast Asia but also in other global markets.

Surprising The Best Cultivation Practices

My dream has always been for the Philippines to become a major player in the Asian regional market and to benefit from the opportunities of global economy. Hence, the policies and reforms our Administration introduced were focused on this concern.

We designated agricultural growth corridors throughout the country and did all we could to develop the best cultivation practices and technologies for both staple and high-value crops within them. We identified the 20 poorest provinces in the country and invested therein extra energy and resources to improve their personal condition of mass poverty.

We also focused vital support sectors such as transport, irrigation, processing, credit, and so forth—to bolster our agricultural production breakthrough. We sought to invest in knowledge which spurred us to introduce the best appropriate technologies of the time.

SEARCA’s Record of Achievement

It was during this period that Los Baños became not just my sanctuary and SEARCA’s frequent destination among all the Southeast Asian Ministries of Education. Los Baños was where I had the opportunity to work with a society which acts as one big family, not so many separate ones.

It was during this period of SEARCA’s fifth decade, let us keep the spirit of cooperation alive among us all and even strengthen it. Together as a family, let us put it, let us sail with the wind and sometimes against it but we must sail. Not drift, nor lie at anchor.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Agriculture: The Backbone of Our Development

by Former Philippine President Fidel V. Ramos

Introductory

Many Thanks for this Special Award that SEARCA has given to me.

It is an honor for me to be included in the list of the most outstanding farmers in the Southeast Asia region, and SEARCA is being recognized as a major role model of agricultural advancements in the region.

Wishing SEARCA Well

I will cherish it – as a token of the precious work that you in SEARCA have for what I tried to do in agriculture and rural development during my term as President.

Modernizing our Country’s Farming Sector

As most of us here well know, my Administration focused a major part of its resources and energy into modernizing our country’s agricultural sector. Successful Administrations before mine had routinely treated agriculture as the “stepchild” of Philippine development. But even so, the industrial sector that some had lavished public investment—despite common people’s complaints that they are not feeling the supposed benefits of growth—are getting away!

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Agricultural Development will not be Enough

Agricultural development—along with rapid expansion of jobs and income opportunities in management and services—will be key to increasing the quality of life and reducing poverty in rural Southeast Asia.

Recent trends, however, suggest that agricultural development alone will not be enough to sustain growth and poverty reduction in rural Southeast Asia in the years ahead.

The only kind of agricultural production may no longer be a major factor to food security and poverty reduction.

“Land Mining” for Wealth Creation

Economic history shows us how technological change supports productivity increase and wealth creation in the countries. Investments are also needed in support services— particularly infrastructure and institutions— which would reduce the cost of doing business in rural areas; sustained productivity growth from the unique technologies improved the rural economy.

Not only should Government invest in agriculture and rural development. Our elected leaders must also improve their overall performance, and deliver governance that is honest, transparent, participative, predictable, and credible. And since government cannot provide all the investment that R&D will need, the best thing it can do is to provide the policy conducive to private R&D.

A Great More for SEARCA to Do

All these mean that there more SEARCA needs to do.

Among all that this Center must achieve, building and strengthening linkages and partnerships stand out as the key strategies.

Equally important is the thrust that agricultural and rural development is the springboard from which a developing country such as ours can assure the sustained progress and well-being of all its people.

For SEARCA— as for our country— poverty alleviation continues to be the noblest cause of all.

The David Timberman Study

The Philippines’ Under-Performance

Allow me now to cite the observations of Dr. David Timberman, a scholar who has worked long years and has written extensively on Southeast Asia and South Asia in his previous postings with the USAID, Asia Foundation, and Asia Society.

In a recent essay comparing the performance of Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines in terms of political, economic, and social development, it was pointed out that “Ramos accelerated the economic reforms begun under Aquino, in 1990, the country opened to international financial markets and the peso became fully convertible in 1993, a genuinely independent Central Bank (Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas or BSP) was established, telecommunications and other strategic sectors were finally deregulated, privatization was accelerated, and foreign investment was cultivated.

Lessons Learned

In closing, let us not forget to congratulate the recipients of your SEARCA Loyalty Awards. These Awards should be regarded as deeply meaningful. Obviously, a lot of people find it fulfilling to work in these organizations.

All of us must rededicate ourselves on the first 41 years of SEARCA— our organization and also our ourselves.

Thank you and Mahalub— best wishes to all!

Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, SEARCA Director, and Dr. Luis Rey I. Velasco, u PLB Chancellor.

9.5 SE Asian farmers get grants

Nine Southeast Asians will receive funding support from SEARCA’s Seed Fund for Strategic Research and Training (SFR) to jumpstart their research.

The new SFRD awards, the third batch since SFRD’s launch in 2007, were recognized on 27 November 2007 at SEARCA’s 41st anniversary program.

The grantee’s proposals, and home institutions are:

- Roi Arel Bambang (Gonar cassavafermista) as an Alternative Source of Livelihood for upland farmers in Indonesia.

Dr. Ariyud G. Garcia, Manager of SEARCA’s Research and Development Department, Dr. Armenio M. Balisacan, SEARCA Director, and Dr. Luis Rey I. Velasco, UPLB Chancellor.

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The SEARCA DIARY DEC 2007

An honor due SPECIAL AWARD FOR FORMER PHILIPPINE PRESIDENT FIDEL V. RAMOS

by Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, SEARCA Director

Today, on SEARCA’s 41st Anniversary, we are privileged to be able to honor a multi-talented man who has left a profound imprint in his life in the service of the Philippines.

Iconic with his famous untie tobacco, earning him the moniker “Tabako”, as well as his thumbs-up sign, his honor has been an example for many of us of simplicity, hard-work, service, can-do attitude, hands-on leadership, dogged determination, loyalty, courage, and nationalism.

With his keen aspiration for a great Filipino nation, he did his utmost when he had the power to do so to reform the Philippines so that its people may live in dignity.

During his presidency, he led his administration to focus on accelerating the pace of economic growth by building the international competitiveness of its industries, reforming regulation in services and industry, and investing in basic infrastructure. He strongly supported the implementation of a Social Reform Agenda so that the Filipinos would be able to achieve its human development targets. This Social Reform Agenda is considered to be the first effort of the Philippine public administrative system to organize the various sectors of government toward securing the so-called minimum basic needs of people before attending to other demands of priority sectors.

It is for these and his other endeavors that we present to you this Special Award on the Honorable Fidel V. Ramos.

Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, SEARCA Director

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Experts glean lessons from tropical forestry project

Fourteen experts and representatives of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) representatives and SEARCA participated in a roundtable discussion on lessons learned from the Small Grants Program to Promote Tropical Forests (SGP-PTF) on 10 November 2007 at SEARCA, Los Baños, Laguna, Philippines.

A key lesson identified is that in the absence of a formalized legal framework on access rights of the community, there is a need to improve interaction between communities and local authorities so that access rights can be arranged informally.

Mr. Eduardo E. Quebral, Regional Program Coordinator of SGP-PTF, discussed the four major themes of accumulated lessons from the project. These are: (1) coping with resource uncertainty and living with rapid social change, (2) strengthening local forest governance, (3) supporting practice through policy and collaboration, and (4) sustaining livelihood. He emphasized that sustainable forest management should always involve the community, local government and other sectors of the locality in order to be effective.

In his opening remarks, Dr. Gil C. Saguiquit, SEARCA Deputy Director for Administration, said, “This [roundtable] is our continuing effort to share the learnings of the program. This is an innovative way of articulating our advocacy on natural resource management which is one of the thrusts of SEARCA. We also put a lot on knowledge management (KM) as our voice in bringing out the worthwhile outputs of our work.”

UNDP and SEARCA have been implementing the SGP-PTF since 2002. The project provided support to enhance the capacity of the communities in eight Asian countries (Thailand, Philippines, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Vietnam, Indonesia, and Malaysia) to address the twin goals of managing the tropical forests and reducing poverty in these communities. It is funded by the European Commission (EC).

SEARCA participates in Filippiniana book donation to Cambodia

SEARCA was among the organizations that provided books to the Philippine Embassy in Cambodia for a Filippiniana collection that it donated to Cambodia on 11 December 2007. The book donation marked the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Philippines and Cambodia.

The collection was turned over to the National Library of Cambodia and the Library of the Senate of Cambodia during formal ceremonies led by H.E. Lourdes G. Morales, Philippine Ambassador to Cambodia, and H.E. Gum Samath, Secretary General of Cambodia’s Senate and Director Khit SokHoa of the National Library. The event was witnessed by other officials of the two libraries, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, ambassadors of the ASEAN member countries to Cambodia.

The Philippine Embassy in Cambodia says the collection contained more than 60 coffee table books, yearbooks, reference materials, compact disks, and other reading materials reflecting the history, government, culture, environment, and people of the Philippines. They covered topics ranging from governance, business, economics and entrepreneurship to art, dance, literature and food. The collection included books written by Dr. Jose Rizal, national hero of the Philippines, as well as classic essays and other literary works of prominent Philippine artists and personalities.

Philippine Ambassador Morales said having books about the Philippines in the national libraries in Cambodia would enhance learning and help in cultivating a deeper understanding between the peoples of both countries, particularly at this time when Cambodians’ interest and desire to learn more about the world around them and the region are high.

Agriculture and fisheries experts needed, says Timorese education minister

Timor-Leste is in urgent need for more highly trained human resources who could assist in the development of agriculture and fisheries sectors of the country. This was expressed by H.E. Dr. Joao Cancio Freitas, new Minister of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports of Timor-Leste, during his meeting with Dr. Editha C. Cedicol, SEARCA’s Graduate Scholarship Department Manager, on 9 November 2007 in Dili, Timor-Leste.

Dr. Cedicol who was in Timor-Leste to interview Timorese candidates for SEARCA graduate scholarship for school year 2008-2009, paid a courtesy call on the new Minister of Education. Dr. Abaso dos Santos, Director of Higher Education of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports, and Dr. Aurelio Da Guterres, Vice Rector for International Relations of the National University of Timor-Leste, emphasized also that their country needs more lecturers and researchers. Dr. Guterres joined Dr. Cedicol as the Ministry’s representative in interviewing 18 candidates for the SEARCA scholarship.

SEARCA and IFS co-organizes biotech workshops

SEARCA, through its Biotechnology Information Center (BIC), co-organized a series of workshops on risk management and social marketing of public sector biotechnology products. The workshops were held on 24-25 July, 7-8 August, and 3-4 October at Tagaytay City, Naga City, and Pampanga, respectively.

The workshops, which had 122 core participants, used a variety of learning tools such as lectures, sharing of experiences, study visits, role playing, interactive games, video showing, and group discussions and planning. Resource persons discussed global and Philippine crop biotechnology status; the biosafety framework in the Philippines and its regulations for field trials; principles of risk communication and social marketing; and sharing of experiences in clearing regulatory requirements and in biotech communication.

Special briefings on Papaya Ring Spot Virus-Resistant (PRSV-R) papaya and Fruit and Shook Borer Resistant (FSBR) eggplant projects — their background, status, product path, safety assessment, socio-economic and intellectual property/licensing aspects — were given. The PRSV-R papaya project is an initiative of the Philippine Department of Science and Technology-Philippine Council for Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources Research and Development (DOST-PCARDC), Institute of Plant Breeding-University of the Philippines Los Baños (IPB-UPLB), and the Monsanto, Inc. for FSBR eggplant project, on the other hand, is a joint collaboration by the IPB-UPLB and the Maharasthra Hybrid Seeds Company. The projects, which are also supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), specifically its two projects, namely: Agricultural Biotech Support Project II (ABSP) and Economic Modernization through Efficient Reforms and Governance Enhancement and International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA), are implemented by UPLB-FB.

The workshop series’ other organizer was the DOST-PCARDC, Philippines Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Plant Industry, SEARCA, in cooperation with the IFS, for providing the training opportunities that they offer.

The IFS Senior Advisors, Dr. Elias Ayuk of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) in Dakar, Senegal and Prof. Sten Hagberg of Uppsala University, Sweden served as resource persons on proposal writing.

Dr. Ayuk emphasized the importance of a clear and feasible methodology. Furthermore, he said that researchers should not always look for sophisticated methods. It is more important to inform the readers how you are going to collect the information you need and you are going to do with the data. Often, this decides whether a proposal is granted or rejected, he explained.
The University of the Philippines (UP) has affirmed the commitment of the Philippine government to the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) by agreeing to host SEARCA on the UP Los Baños (UPLB) campus until 2026.

The hosting agreement was signed between UP and SEARCA on 30 October 2007 by Dr. Arsenio Balasacan, SEARCA Director and Dr. Emerlinda R. Roman, UP President. The signing was witnessed by Dr. Luis Rey I. Velasco, UPLB Chancellor, and Dr. Gil Saguijo Jr., SEARCA Deputy Director for Administration.

The agreement binds SEARCA to strive to provide a regular number of professorial chairs to UPLB, graduate scholarships and assistantships, and other opportunities for academic and research undertakings to current UPLB faculty and other staff.

UPLB serves as one of the study posts of SEARCA’s graduate scholars. Currently, more than 80 SEARCA graduate scholars are enrolled in UPLB. Also, eight professorial chairs have been awarded to UPLB this school year.

SEARCA also agreed to contribute to the development and maintenance of UPLB’s support infrastructure and services.

SEARCA currently sits, free of charge, on about 4.5 hectares of land in UPLB for its office building, conference facilities, residence hotel, housing and apartments.

SEARCA launches 2 books on development

L-R: Dr.Thomas Elhaut, Prof. Solita Monsod, Senator Eduardo Angara, Former Prime Minister Cesar Virata, Dr. Arsenio M. Balasacan, Mr. Ellie Osir, and Dr. Jikun Huang.

SEARCA, together with the Ateneo de Manila University Press, launched two publications that bring the development agenda to the fore on 7 October 2007 held at New World Renaissance Hotel, Makati City, Philippines.

The two books are:
(1) The Dynamics of Regional Development: The Philippines in East Asia and (2) Reasserting the Rural Development Agenda: Lessons Learned and Emerging Challenges in Asia.

The first book is co-edited by Dr. Arsenio M. Balasacan, SEARCA Director and Professor, University of the Philippines Diliman and Dr. Hal Hill, H.W. Arndt Professor of Southeast Asian Economics and the Convenor of the Division of Economics, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University. It compares and analyzes economic policies in the context of globalization and decolonization, and looks closely at the Chinese and Indonesian experiences. It also examines the Philippine economy against the greater framework of local politics, governance, labor markets, infrastructure, trade liberalization, growth, and poverty. It serves as a sequel to the bestselling Philippine Economy: Development, Policies and Challenges, published in 2003, also edited by Balasacan and Hill.

The second book is co-edited by Dr. Balasacan and Nobuhiko Furu, associate professor of agricultural economics at the Graduate School of Science and Technology of Chiba University in Japan. It calls our attention back to the role of agricultural and rural development (ARD) in the economic development debate. While conceding that the agricultural sector’s perceived importance in the international development discourse waned after the 1980s, and noted declining investments in both research and development in the sector, the editors and contributors revisit the evolution of ARD models and experiences, particularly in Asia, and attempt to set a revitalized agenda for ARD in both research and policy in the coming decades.

Dignitaries such as the Philippines’ former Prime Minister Cesar Virata and Senator Edgardo Angara served as keynote speakers during the event.

Sen. Angara highlighted two imperatives in agriculture in the Philippines: research and development (R&D) and the improvement of post-harvest facilities.

On the second imperative, he pointed out that the lack of necessary postharvest facilities causes tremendous losses in the agriculture sector. “If we make these [postharvest facilities] more efficient, our country can be food secure – not necessarily food sufficient but food secure. We can manage limited resources and apply them in areas where they matter,” he said.

Mr. Virata had high praises for the books. He said, “I really appreciate very much the combined pursuit of these authors with reference to a subject that is declining in interest but is very important to economists. [We] commit your focus on development issues affecting the sector and your perseverance to obtain life lessons of the past that could assist us in reaching the preferred future that we would like to see.”

Other notable guests during the event were: Dr. Jikun Huang, Founder and Director of the Center for Chinese Agricultural Policy (CCAP) of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS); Dr. Thomas Elhaut, Director for Asia and the Pacific, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD); and Mr. Ellie Osir, Senior Program Specialist, International Development Research Center (IDRC); H.E. In May, Cambodia Ambassador to the Philippines; Ms. Ines Loge, Scientific Attaché of the French Embassy; Dr. Gela Castillo, National Scientist in the Philippines and Prof. Solita Monsod, Professor, UP School of Economics.

The forum's main objectives were to encourage participants to develop systematized knowledge management (KM) in their organizations; identify markets, infrastructure, trade liberalization, growth, and poverty. It serves

Twenty-one Southeast Asians and Europeans participated in the “Fourth Executive Forum on Natural Resource Management: Natural Resources Knowledge Management in Southeast Asia” held at SEARCA in Los Baños, Laguna, Philippines on 7-9 November 2007.

The participants were from organizations focusing on natural resource management, such as agriculture, fisheries, forestry, and environment from Cambodia, Denmark, France, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand. The three-day forum centered on the application of knowledge management principles on natural resource management in Southeast Asia.

21 Southeast Asians, Europeans attend Natural Resources Knowledge Management forum

Up renews hosting agreement with SEARCA

Photo shows (from left) Dr. Gil Saguijo Jr., SEARCA Deputy Director, Dr. Arsenio M. Balasacan, SEARCA Director, Dr. Emerlinda R. Roman, UP President, and Dr. Luis Rey I. Velasco, UPLB Chancellor.

SEARCA-ConServ bags three projects

SEARCA’s Consulting Services Department (ConServ) has recently been awarded three projects from the Philippine Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), Department of Energy (DOE), and Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

These are:
• DAR – Sustaining the Gains of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP), Master Plan for Philippine Rural Development. This six-month project aims to fine tune agrarian reform in the context of global development by conducting in-depth analysis of the situation. It involves the conduct of the sector’s review and development of a framework and formulation of a Master Plan for Rural Development. Mr. Johnson Mercader serves as the Team Leader. It started on 5 November 2007 and will end on 5 May 2008. The total project amount is Php1,991,044.
• DOE – Profiling and Baseline Studies for Unelectrified Barangays in Support of the Government’s Expanded Rural Electrification (ER) Program. Funded by the World Bank, the project will collect the required data from targeted barangays in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao using rapid rural appraisal (RRA) techniques. The data to be collected will help DOE undertake the following tasks: 1) Identify the list of barangays to be included in the Project Access Phase 2 and possibly Phase 3. 2) Assess the energy needs of public and potential livelihood generation facilities; 3) Assess potential ownership and maintenance arrangements for the photovoltaic (PV) systems to be installed at the public facilities; 4) Assess the potential five-year rural household PV market, taking into account the number of households, sources, levels and seasonality of incomes, willingness to pay for different types of energy services provided by PV systems such as domestic lighting, entertainment, communications, security lighting, community views and experiences with PV systems; 5) Credit services operating in the area; and 5) Prepare a profile on each
• DENR – Preparation of a Working Paper on Free Patent (FP) Amendments under DENR’s Land Administration and Management Project’s (LAMP 2). Headed by Mr. Virgilio Cabezon, the project primarily aims to investigate the potential impacts of the proposed amendments on the FP titling process and how these changes can accelerate land titling in alienable and disposable lands, to include rural and urban lands. The project is from 9 November 2007 to 9 February 2008 and costs Php7,290,250.00.

ConServ is the consulting arm of SEARCA. It provides professional consulting services to government institutions and private enterprises in Southeast Asia in the areas of agricultural competitiveness and natural resource management. (RM/MC/SEARCA)

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IPB hosts 20th University Consortium meeting

Indonesia’s Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB) hosted the 20th University Consortium Executive Officers and Coordinators Meeting on 5-7 November 2007.

The meeting focused on the need to generate funds for the UC and to enhance research mobilization efforts. The expert services of a consultant on fund generation were tapped to assist the UC in this aspect. Ms. Mariam CushITERAL, Executive Director of Venture for Fund Raising based in the Philippines, was invited to present some fund raising strategies and recommendations for the UC to consider. In her presentation, Ms. CushITERAL pointed out the following fund raising needs of the UC: 1) the niche of the UC and its successes; and 2) more visibility to raise funds. To address these needs, the following strategies were recommended: 1) emphasize the UC’s long-term existence and track record; 2) emphasize the impact of UC activities on individuals, institutions, countries, and the region as well as the prestige of being a UC grantee; 3) put across a message to the grantors to improve the value of their credentials by helping to improve the reputation of the UC; and 4) market the UC experts. She then presented some fund raising strategies and challenged the UC to decide and focus on any of the following: 1) endowment; 2) earned income; 3) donations from individuals; 4) grants; and 5) membership fees.

To facilitate the UCs movement along the direction it wants to take, the UC Executive Board decided to set up a UC Steering Committee to make decisions on the activities that the UC must undertake and implement in the future. The Committee is composed of a representative each of the immediate past host, the present host, and the future host of the UC meetings, and the UC Secretariat. The Committee shall communicate to all UC members/associate members the line-up of activities that shall be pursued in the succeeding years.

The University of Queensland has agreed to host the 21st UC meeting. Hosting the annual meeting of the Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC) is rotated among its member institutions.

Participants of the meeting were:
- Dr. H. Ahmad Ansoni Mattijk, Rector, Dr. Kharli Ali Anwar Noto Edupugro, Dean, Graduate School, Dr. Djafir Martianto, Vice Dean, Graduate School, and Dr. Marmun Sarma, Director for International Programs, Institut Pertanian Bogor, Indonesia.
- Dr. Masihurri, Chairman, Master of Agribusiness Management Program, University of the Philippines Los Baños.
- Dr. Aini Ilidria, Dean, Graduate School, Dr. Hasnah Mohd. Ghazali, Deputy Dean, School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia.
- Dr. Somprach Thanawanayakurn, Vice President for International Affairs, and Ms. Phacharavadee Prarrattakul, Director, International Affairs Office, Kasetsart University, Thailand.
- Dr. Mahesh Upadhyaya, Associate Dean, Faculty of Agricultural Sciences Graduate Studies, University of British Columbia, Canada.
- Dr. Richard Williams, Professor and Coordinator, Faculty International Programs, Faculty of Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Veterinary Science, University of Queensland, Australia.
- Dr. Akimi Fujimoto, Director of International Programs, and Dr. Michitro Mihara, Deputy Director of International Programs, Tokyo University of Agriculture, Japan.
- Dr. Luis Rey V. Velasco, Chancellor, Oscar B. Zamora, Dean, Graduate School, and Dr. Cristelina N. Cuersenas, Secretary, Graduate Studies, University of the Philippines Los Baños.
- Ms. Marianne G. Qubeeral, Executive Director, Venture for Fund Raising.
- Asmario M. Balasacan, Director, and Dr. Editha C. Cedicol, Manager, Graduate Scholarship Department, SEARCA.

The UC was established in September 1989. Its founding members are Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB) and Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) in Indonesia; Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM); Kasetsart University (KU) in Thailand; and the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB). Its associate members are University of British Columbia (UBC) in Canada; University of Queensland (UQ) in Australia; the Georg-August University of Goettingen (UG) in Germany; and Tokyo University of Agriculture (TUA) in Japan. SEARCA serves as the UC Secretariat.

SEARCA Director presents Asia’s poverty profile at US seminar

The Asia Foundation hosted a seminar titled “Poverty in Asia: Patterns, Priorities, and Policies” on 29 November 2007 at its main office in San Francisco, California, USA.

The seminar was delivered by Dr. Arsenio M. Balasacan, SEARCA Director, a development economist whose research mainly focuses on poverty, inequality, and agricultural and rural development.

Dr. Balasacan stressed that although Asia, particularly China, has largely accounted for the global reduction in poverty rates, the region continues to account for nearly two-thirds of the poor globally. He pointed out, however, that such reduction has not been uniform across countries (or even within a country); the slower progress of South Asia has been slower than East Asia’s.

The SEARCA official clarified that the rapid urbanization in Asia has not substantially reduced the relative importance of rural poverty. That is, poverty remains a largely rural condition and likely to stay that way in the next 20 years.

He also discussed chronic poverty, and presented a Philippines study on its vis-à-vis agriculture. Among the findings are: (1) multi-dimensional deprivation tends to correlate strongly with the dependence of the local economy on agriculture, and (2) rural income diversification is key to addressing chronic poverty.

To improve the response of poverty to income growth, Dr. Balasacan recommends that focus should be on agricultural and rural development and what he refers to as the “deep determinants” of poverty reduction: education, health, and asset reform. At the country level, the key response should be domestic reforms in order to enable rural areas to sharpen their response to market access opportunities. This can be done by working for the spatial integration of local economies and reforming education and labor market policies. Moreover, he bashes for the building of capacities of developing countries to enable them to address new challenges, particularly global climate change, new technologies, and globalization.
SEARCA Directors / from page 11

He identified the following as challenges facing development organizations, researchers, and practitioners, which could have a significant impact in the lives of Asia’s millions of small farmers and the poor:

- Supermarket revolution, which drives the rising incomes of consumers and urbanization on the demand side, and globalization and modernization of marketing systems on the supply side.
- Gene Revolution (taking over the Green Revolution), particularly rapid advances in agricultural biotechnology, which are driven mainly by the private sector.
- Global Climate Change, particularly as regards risks posed to agriculture and human development and adaptation and mitigation measures.
- Biofuels, the rising demand for which is both an opportunity and a threat for farmers and the poor in the developing world.

The seminar was attended mostly by the program managers and staff of The Asia Foundation, which supports programs in Asia that help improve governance, law, and civil society; women’s empowerment; economic reform and development; and international relations. With its network of 17 offices throughout Asia, the Foundation collaborates with private and public partners to support leadership and institutional development, exchanges, and policy research. (LLTalater)

SEARCA awards 4 travel grants

SEARCA awarded travel grants to four Filipinos whose scientific papers were accepted for presentation in international conferences from October to December 2007. Two are from the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB), the Asia Foundation, which supports programs in Asia that help improve governance, law, and civil society; women’s empowerment; economic reform and development; and international relations. With its network of 17 offices throughout Asia, the Foundation collaborates with private and public partners to support leadership and institutional development, exchanges, and policy research. (LLTalater)

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- Dr. Serle B. Jamias, College of Development Communication, “Communication for Behavior Change: Lessons Learned from Development Communication Research in Agriculture, Environment, Biotechnology, and Emerging Fields.”

The eight new awards bring to 230 the total number of SEARCA professorial chairs awarded to UPLB since 1974. Of this, 84 were granted through the Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources. (LLDomingo)

Economics students from the East Virginia University (EVUS) visited the Center on 19 December 2007. Ms. Lui L. Talater, Senior Executive Assistant, Office of the Director, SEARCA, welcomed the students from EVUS, who also presented a paper entitled “Assessment of the Impacts of Oil Spill on Agriculture and Aquaculture in Coastal River Planning: The Case of Daguian City, Philippines.”

The other two travel grants were awarded to researchers from the University of the Philippines Visayas (uPV), who presented two papers at the Eighth Asian Fisheries Congress, “Bioeconomic Modelling of Philippine Fisheries Policies” at the University of the Philippines Los Baños Cayaba Campus, and “Empirical Results from two Marine Oil Spills in Visayas, Philippines.”

The awardees and their research topics are:

- Dr. Christian Joseph R. Cuganum of the Crop Protection Cluster, College of Agriculture, “Managing Plant Diseases and Promoting Sustainability and Productivity with Trichoderma.”
- Dr. Floriella A. Lantican of the Department of Agricultural Economics (DAE), College of Economics and Management (CEM), “The Philippine Banana Industry: Market Performance, Constraints, and Policy Directions.”
- Dr. Inocencio Buot, Jr. of the Institute of Biological Sciences (IBS), College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), “The influence of genetic diversity in the rice improvement.”
- Dr. Merlina N. Andalecio, Coordinator for Research, Institute of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences, UPV, who presented two papers at the DELTA 2007 Conference: Managing the Coastal Land-Water Interface in Tropical Delta Systems held on 7-8 November 2007 in Bang Sen, Thailand; and “Assessment of the Impacts of Oil Spill on Agriculture and Aquaculture in Coastal River Planning: The Case of Daguian City, Philippines.”
- Dr. Rodolfo F. Sabade, Associate Professor, College of Arts and Sciences, UPV, who also presented two papers at the Eighth Asian Fisheries Forum held on 20-23 November 2007 in Kochi, India: “Economic Valuation in Sustainable Marine Resource Management: Demonstration, Appropriation and Utilization of Economic Values of Marine Resources for Sustainability and Conservation” and “On-Off-Site Communities Matter in Marine Oil Spill Damage Assessment: A Critical Review and Empirical Results from two Marine Oil Spills in Visayas, Philippines.”
- Dr. Virgilio C. Caluya, Associate Professor, College of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences, UPV, who presented two papers at the Eighth Asian Fisheries Congress, “Bioeconomic Modelling of Philippine Fisheries Policies” at the Conference on Business, Environment, International Competitiveness and Sustainable Development in the Asia-Pacific Economies to be held in Selangor, Malaysia on 3-4 December 2007.

The SEARCA travel grant provides limited support to qualified applicants who will present scientific/policy papers in international or local scientific fora. The topic of the paper must be along the thrusts of SEARCA and has regional relevance. Southeast Asian nationals working in a development-oriented institution or graduate students of reputable universities in Southeast Asia are eligible to apply. (LLOCmmer)

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after 37 years of committed service to the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) and achieving a marked distinction as a productive scholar and effective teacher in social forestry and natural resource management, Dr. Lucenio L. Rebugio has been appointed by the Commission on Higher Education as a center of academic excellence. Dr. Rebugio served as Visiting Associate Professor in Chitagong University, Bangladesh where he developed an innovative graduate curriculum in social forestry and natural resource management. He has published 108 scholarly works over the years, notably, three of his pioneering papers in the field of social forestry and natural resource management in the Philippines. Dr. Rebugio’s SEARCA Professorial Program—published between 1985 and 1987 were seminal and continue to be leading references in social forestry in the Philippines. Likewise, Dr. Rebugio’s SEARCA Professorial Lecture, titled “Paradigm Shift: The Key to Sustainable Forest and Environment Management,” delivered in 1995 at UPLB and Antalya, Turkey and later published in a refereed journal, has sparked major policy and program reforms in forestry. The paper advocates forestry reforms that wean away from the long-established technical orientation of forestry and instead move toward a more holistic and integrated approach that includes social dimensions of natural resource management.

An internationally recognized scholar, Dr. Rebugio served as Visiting Associate Professor of Tropical Forest Sociology at Yale University in Connecticut, USA in 1984. He was a Research Fellow at the Environment and Policy Institute of the East-West Center, Honolulu, Hawaii in 1984. He also served as Chief Technical Advisor/Rural Sociologist cum Forestry Extension Specialist of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Project in the Development of Professional Education in the Forestry Sector at Chitagong University, Bangladesh where he developed an innovative graduate Forest Policy and Planning degree that became the model for the entire Bangladesh.

Some 20 years after publishing his landmark paper on development efforts. The primer likewise addresses the country’s overall economy. It discusses the primary agricultural commodities produced for the import and export market and the market trend. It also delves on government interventions and policy reforms that have had strong impact on development efforts. The primer likewise underscores how public investment and research and development have bolstered Vietnam’s agriculture sector.

The Southeast Asia Agriculture and Development Prime Minister’s Office recently published a report titled “Rotary Blade Power Tiller” under a SEARCA scholarship. His co-authors are Ms. Finley Telesco, Banyat Sittihin, and Thanya Khiem.

Dr. Sakda et al’s paper discussed the results of the application of a mathematical modeling approach to predict optimum design parameters in terms of the total specific energy requirements of “Picks,” “One,” and “Two” shaped rotary blades. The study suggests rotary tiller design under local conditions.

Aside from their academic work at UPL, Dr. Samakkee is currently Vice President for Research, and Dr. Sakda serves as Assistant to the President for Academic Affairs.

Dr. Sakda earned his PhD in Forest Resource Management at the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) in 1986 under a SEARCA scholarship. On the other hand, Dr. Samakkee obtained her MS in Agricultural Engineering at UPLB in 1986 and her PhD in Agricultural Process Engineering at Universiti Putra Malaysia in 1993, both times under a SEARCA scholarship.

SEARCA recently published the Vietnamese volume of the Southeast Asian Agriculture and Development Prime Minister’s Office’s “Rotary Blade Power Tiller” distributed by Dr. Nguyen Tri Khiem, Dean, Faculty of Economics, a Guang University, and Vietnamese SEARCA fellow.

A part of a series covering 10 Southeast Asian countries, the Vietnamese volume is the fifth to come out after those on the Philippines, Malaysia, Myanmar, and Singapore.

The primer describes Vietnam’s agriculture and its significant contributions in strengthening the country’s overall economy. It discusses the primary agricultural commodities produced for the import and export market and the market trend. It also delves on government interventions and policy reforms that have had strong impact on development efforts. The primer likewise underscores how public investment and research and development have bolstered Vietnam’s agriculture sector.

The Southeast Asia Agriculture and Development Prime Minister’s Office is a selected service of the Southeast Asian Agriculture and Development Prime Minister’s Office and includes comprehensive reference material on Southeast Asian agriculture. Each volume featuring a Southeast Asian country presents the institutions, structures, policies, and other areas affecting the sector’s performance over the past three decades.

Dr. Khiem holds a PhD in agricultural economics from the University of the Philippines Los Baños. Dr. Khiem has been actively engaged in teaching and research for most of his career. He held various leadership positions at Can Tho University. He also worked as Forestry Project Director at the Philippine-based International Rice Research Institute as a Research Fellow and Project Scientist.

Having obtained his MS in agricultural economics at UPLB in 1973 under a SEARCA scholarship, Dr. Khiem is recognized as one of the 1,000- strong SEARCA fellows from Southeast Asia.

Dr. Coly S. Binoya, a graduate of the Seed Fund for Research and Training (SFRIT) in 2005, won the best paper award in the Third International Conference of the Asia-Pacific Association of Educators for Agriculture and Environment (APEAE) held on 4-7 November, 2007 at the Philippines Caraban Center science City of Muñoz, Nueva Ecija, Philippines.

Her paper titled “Rethinking Primary Agriculture Education and Environment Lessons Learned from the Agroecosystems Analysis for the Sustainable Development of Lake Buhi” is an expanded version of her SFRIT research study. It competed against seven other papers from other Asia-Pacific countries under the session on “Sustainable Agriculture, Climate Change and Health”. Moreover, Dr. Binoya submitted a proposal to JICA for a joint development planning for sustainable watershed and lake management in Buhi, Camarines Sur, Philippines, and recently received a funding commitment of about US$89,000 for 2008 implementation. Such development exemplifies the primary intention of SEARCA’s SFRIT.

Dr. Binoya currently sits as the Secretary and Executive Director of the APEAE.

APEAE was established in 1997 as a non-stock, non-partisan, non-government, international organization of educators, researchers, extension workers, administrators, policymakers, practitioners, development workers/specialists and institutions involved in agriculture and environment education. (R.Gavieros)

Comparative Evaluation of Isolation, PCR Detection and Clinic – Pathological Diagnostic Approaches in Field Cases of Mycoplasma hyopneumoniae infection in Selected Farms of Luzon, Philippines

Mycoplasma hyopneumoniae isolation from 46 lung samples is justified by 24 (52%) percent positive results, while the 12 nasal swabs were all negative. In PCR identification, 71 out of 34 (20%) showed positive reaction in the PCR in DNA extracted from lung tissue, while the 12 nasal swab samples subjected to PCR identification had negative results.

Among the clinic-pathological methods used in this study for MPA diagnosis, hispathology 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.

Graduate thesis abstracts

Landscape Dynamics and Hydrologic Changes in Mangana Watershed, CEBU, PHILIPPINES

Ricardo T. Bagaria,
Philippines

PhD in Environmental Science University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB)

The change in landscape structure and its influence on the hydrology of Mangana Watershed in Cebu Province were assessed. Land use maps in 1956, 1985, and 1995 together with topographic and other thematic maps were used to identify and delineate the common landscape elements. ArcView 3.2 was used to analyze changes in patch size, number and density in landscape pattern with respect to soil type and slope of the watershed. The temporal change in eco-system and soil erosion potential was determined. Actual runoff coefficient was compared with estimated runoff coefficient using Soil Conservation Service Curve Number for estimated runoff. Soil infiltration rate was determined for different land uses and soil types. The influence of change in population of the watershed was also assessed.

The watershed landscape consists of a matrix of annual cropland; patches of tree plantation, brushland, grassland, and perennial cropland; and river and road corridors. The area for annual cropland has decreased continuously throughout the study period (1955-1995) while tree plantation’s area has increased throughout this period. This contributed to the downward trend in runoff coefficient. The proclamation of the watershed as protected area and reforestation activities improve watershed hydrography.

Comparative Evaluation of Isolation, PCR Detection and Clinic – Pathological Diagnostic Approaches in Field Cases of Mycoplasma hyopneumoniae infection in Selected Farms of Luzon, Philippines

Nguyen Tat Toan, Vietnam

MS in Veterinary Medicine, 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, edematous, and pyrexia, and 2) chronic, which is characterized by degenerated, atelectatic areas of anteromedial, apical, cardiac, and diaphragmatic lobes. The entanglement of bronchial and mediastinal lymph nodes was also seen in the infected pigs. In histopathology, bronchial, ovalon, and perivascular lymphoid hyperplasia as well as lymphoid nodule formation were found to be the most characteristic clinical features associated with Mycoplasma hyopneumoniae infection.
SEARCA, University of Hawaii Manoa (UHM), and East-West Center organized an International Conference on Sustainability Science for Watershed Landscapes in Honolulu, Hawaii on 13-14 November 2007. Sustainability science is an emerging research field, which examines the interactions between natural and social systems, and the effect of those interactions to the challenge of sustainability.

The conference presented the state of the art of sustainability science research for watershed management, examined specific case studies in Southeast Asia and the Pacific, and aimed to strengthen the development of a transdisciplinary method of organizing research to inform general and specific instruments of public policy, especially on watershed management. It discussed thematic and issue papers on sustainability science and watershed management, watershed restoration for flood management, watershed information systems, and sustainable transformation for poverty alleviation. Critical issues for research and policy analysis at the regional, national, and international levels were also identified.

The conference and the resulting book manuscript by leading economists, biologists, hydrologists, and engineers will help synthesize a third wave in sustainability science that focuses on facilitating policy analysis.

Led by SEARCA Director Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, participants from Southeast Asia included Dr. Arnulfo G. Garcia and Ms. Nyhria G. Rogel, both of SEARCA, Dr. Nicomedes D. Briones of the University of the Philippines Los Baños School of Environmental Science and Management (UPLB-SESAM), Dr. Rodel Lasco of World Agroforestry Center Philippine Office (ICRAF), Dr. Yolanda Garcia of WorldFish Center-Philippines, Dr. Daniel Murdiyarso of Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) in Indonesia, and Dr. Sittidaj Pongkijvorasin of Chulalongkorn University in Thailand.

Other participants were from universities, research organizations, and government agencies in Japan, Hawaii and the US Mainland.

A three-year project on the development and implementation of a Master of Science related to Integrated Management of Natural Resources and Agricultural Development (INRAD) was launched at SEARCA on 6 November 2007. The project, funded by the Asia Link Program of the European Union, is primarily aimed at building the human resource capacities of the Royal University of Agriculture (RUA) in Cambodia and the University of Lampung (UNILA) in Indonesia. Kasetsart University in Thailand and Universiti Malaysia Sarawak in Malaysia will provide technical assistance to RUA and UNILA.

The project is subdivided into six work packages, namely:

1) preliminary integrated natural resource management field research and preparation of the curricula;
2) academic training in Asia and Europe for selected staff;
3) implementation of the INRAD master course and support to the mobility of students;
4) preparation of training tools and information and communication technologies (ICTs) investments;
5) communication and exchange; and
6) management and governance.

The INRAD Project launch was spearheaded by Dr. Didier Pillot, Director for International Relations, Montpellier SupAgro.