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Photo by Aung Kyaw Tun

PROTECTING FOOD GROWERS

As agriculture feeds nations, governments need to provide safety nets to farmers who increasingly contend with risks of adverse weather, pests, and diseases.

Southeast Asians mull stronger agricultural insurance program

MANILA, Philippines—Six Southeast Asian countries were represented in a meeting that aimed to foster collaborations between and among governments, development organizations, and other stakeholders to develop a cohesive insurance program that is resilient to challenges brought about by climate change, among others.

Participants of the *Policy Roundtable on Improving the Agricultural Insurance Program to Enhance Resilience to Climate Change in Southeast Asia* held on 29-30 July 2015 shared knowledge and experiences on various facets of agricultural insurance in Southeast Asia and identified key challenges related to agricultural insurance. The event was a joint endeavor of SEARCA, Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice), and Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation (PCIC), with support from the Food Security Center of the University of Hohenheim. It had 55 participants from Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, said the Center's policy roundtable series provides a venue to present science-based studies that make sense of the complexities of issues in agriculture and rural development.

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Senator Cynthia A. Villar (at rostrum) talks about the bill that aims to expand the coverage of crop insurance in the Philippines. Flanking her are (from right) Philippine Agriculture Undersecretary Segfredo R. Serrano, SEARCA Director Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., LBP Department Manager for Development Melinda Cruz, and Philippine Rice Research Institute Executive Director Calixto M. Protacio.

Climate change has an undeniably large impact on the Philippines, especially in economic terms, reasserted Dr. Segfredo R. Serrano, Philippine Agriculture Undersecretary for Policy, Planning, Research and Development, and Regulations. He added that there are too many factors for conventional systems and climate change further complicates the situation, and that uncertainties need to be converted to calculable risks.

Senator Cynthia A. Villar, Chair of the Committee on Agriculture and Food of the Philippine Senate, elaborated on the vulnerabilities of the Philippines and its neighbors to climate change. She said the roundtable is timely and crucial, more so for the Philippines because her committee is “drafting a bill to expand the scope and coverage of crop insurance ... to strike a balance between the existing practice of providing subsidies and ensuring the sustainability or profitability of the insurance provider.” She said the roundtable’s outcomes and policy recommendations could be valuable inputs to said bill.

Consolidating experiences

An overview of agricultural insurance in Southeast Asia was presented by Dr. Jose

M. Yorobe, Jr., Professor at the College of Economics and Management University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB), while Dr. Felino P. Lansigan Professor at the UPLB College of Arts and Sciences, discussed the impacts of climate change in agriculture and the role of agricultural insurance.

In the Philippines, agricultural insurance is a government program that provides insurance protection to agricultural producers against loss of crops, livestock, and agricultural assets on account of natural calamities, plant pests and disease or other perils and PCIC is directly responsible for its implementation. Atty. Jovy C. Bernabe, PCIC President, delivered a keynote paper on the program’s challenges and prospects for climate change adaptation. His presentation was supplemented by Dr. Celia M. Reyes, Senior Research Fellow at the Philippine Institute of Development Studies (PIDS), with her keynote paper titled “Targeting the Agricultural Rural Poor: The Case of PCIC’s Special Programs.” Moreover, Ms. Melinda Cruz, Department Manager for Development of the Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP), talked about the bank’s Climate Smart Program, which consolidates all LBP climate change initiatives.

Participants from Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam shared the historical development of agricultural insurance in their country, agricultural insurance product packages available from both public and private providers, financial performance of the insurance program in terms of coverage and cost, public disaster assistance programs, agricultural policies relating to agricultural insurance and climate change, and stakeholder perception of and lessons learned from providing agricultural insurance. Also discussed were issues related to agricultural insurance, including moral hazard, “reasonable” premium, subsidies and tax incentives, counterparting vs. subsidy or

sustainability vs. attractiveness, insurance cover vs. production cost, various agricultural insurance products, requirements for effective agricultural insurance, and road map and institutional support.

Going forward

The participants agreed on initial areas of cooperation, as follows: information and education campaign among farmers and fisherfolk, tighter partnerships with financial institutions, development of index-based crop insurance schemes in partnership with bilateral development agencies, timely communication of accurate climate information to stakeholders, mainstreaming of smart agriculture, setting up of institutional support mechanisms, and establishment of a registry system to collate farmers’ information for easier access and focused implementation. They also drafted a Statement/Declaration for consideration of the Ministers of Agriculture of the participating countries.

Likewise entailed in the way forward are:

- Stepping up the development and piloting of new insurance products that are socially adaptable and sustainable, and which sufficiently address the climate risks faced by agricultural producers in the region.
- Developing in-country capacities on agricultural insurance through training and collaborative projects on product R&D, exchange of insurance experts, sharing of experiences and information, and knowledge management.
- Collaborating to develop and test good agricultural practices that mitigate climate change and complement agricultural insurance.
- Organizing a dedicated unit under the Ministry of Agriculture that will provide insurance to farmers and other stakeholders. (Report from CNGRogel)

THE SEARCA DIARY

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SEARCA Director appointed to unprecedented third term



Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr. has been appointed to an unprecedented third term as Director of SEARCA, and will continue to serve in this capacity until 13 July 2018.

Dr. Saguiguit was nominated by Philippine Education Secretary Bro. Armin A. Luistro. His appointment was unanimously confirmed and endorsed by the SEARCA Governing Board, and approved by the SEAMEO Council of Ministers of Education of 11 member countries. The official appointment was signed by His Excellency Admiral Narong Pipatanasai, Minister of

Education of Thailand and incumbent SEAMEO Council President.

In recommending Dr. Saguiguit for a third term, Secretary Luistro cited his outstanding performance and accomplishments, including ensuring the financial stability of SEARCA as well as establishing the Center as a leading center of excellence for agricultural and rural development in Southeast Asia and the world. Dr. Saguiguit was also commended for the framing of SEARCA's Tenth Five-Year Plan, which is deemed very important and strategic to the Southeast Asian region in light of its focus on food security, poverty reduction, and the ASEAN economic integration.

Under Dr. Saguiguit's leadership, SEARCA focused its programs on emergent and cross-cutting concerns in Southeast Asia's agriculture sector. SEARCA's Institutional Development Assistance Program, which seeks to assist and mainstream young agricultural universities in the region's developing countries, was also his brainchild. Noteworthy too are SEARCA's increased collaborations on research and capacity building projects, including graduate scholarships and short-term trainings, with national and international development agencies

and donor organizations that flourished during Dr. Saguiguit's term.

During his incumbency, Dr. Saguiguit received many awards and citations from member and associate member countries of SEAMEO, academe, development organizations, and partner institutions attesting to his exemplary development work and accomplishments. The most recent include the Honorary Doctorate Degree in Applied Economics from Maejo University conferred by the Princess of Thailand; the rank of *Chevalier de l'Ordre du Mérite Agricole* (Knight of the Order of Agricultural Merit) awarded by the French Government; Vietnamese government recognition for his contributions to education; and the College of Economics and Management (CEM) 2013 Distinguished Alumnus for Agriculture and Rural Development, and the 2013 Outstanding UPLB Alumni Award for Regional Institutional Development, both given by his alma mater, the University of the Philippines Los Baños.

Moving forward, Dr. Saguiguit leads SEARCA's efforts to promote Inclusive and Sustainable Agricultural and Rural Development (ISARD) with particular attention to resource poor farmers and rural communities in Southeast Asia.

IFAD, SEARCA discuss agri transformation in ASEAN

A proposal titled "Agricultural Transformation and Market Integration in the ASEAN Region: Responding to Food Security and Inclusiveness Concerns" was discussed by Dr. Fabrizio Bresciani, lead regional economist at the Asia and Pacific Division of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), with SEARCA on 9 September 2015.

In a meeting with Dr. Bessie M. Burgos and Dr. Maria Cristeta N. Cuaresma, SEARCA Program Heads for Research and Development and Graduate Education and Institutional Development, respectively, Dr. Bresciani explained that the overall goal of the grant proposal is to strengthen the institutional capacity of ASEAN Member States (AMS) in

developing and implementing policies and sub-regional programs that would support integration of smallholders in sub-regional agricultural and food markets.

To pursue this objective, IFAD will be working in collaboration with the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) of the Consultative Group of International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and SEARCA to carry out activities within a five-year implementation period. The proposal will have three components: policy studies and expert workshops, high-level policy forum and roundtables, and technical assistance for planning and policy development.

SEARCA will lead the implementation of a subset of activities. Under the first component, SEARCA will analyze national strategies and policies that promote the competitiveness of smallholder agriculture and its inclusion in regional agrifood markets. Under the second component, SEARCA will organize a roundtable that aims to develop a plan of actions to promote smallholder agriculture in the context of the ASEAN Common Market. (Report from SCSimondac)



Dr. Fabrizio Bresciani (center), lead regional economist at the IFAD Asia and Pacific Division, and Dr. Maria Cristeta N. Cuaresma (right), SEARCA Program Head for Graduate Education and Institutional Development, listen to Dr. Bessie M. Burgos, SEARCA Program Head for Research and Development, describe the Center's umbrella programs.

Myanmar thanks SEARCA, asks further assistance

LOS BAÑOS, Philippines—His Excellency Myint Hlaing, Union Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation of Myanmar, acknowledged and thanked SEARCA for its efforts to develop human resources in his country's agriculture sector, which is anchored primarily on rice.

Occasion was the visit of Minister Myint Hlaing to the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) on 12 September 2015 together with his counterparts in the ASEAN Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry (AMAF) Plus Three (China, Japan, South Korea) and India and senior officials from said countries as a final activity of SOM-AMAF's 37th Meeting in Manila. He had specifically expressed interest in meeting Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., who is now on his third term as SEARCA Director.

The Minister presented to Dr. Saguiguit a plaque and institutional gift as tokens of his country's appreciation for "all SEARCA has done for Myanmar's agricultural development all these years."

In a meeting with 19 MOAI staff studying at the University of the Philippines Los Baños, Minister Myint Hlaing requested SEARCA's assistance to develop rice scientists and farmers to address issues that affect agriculture, including climate



Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation U Myint Hlaing (left) presents a plaque to SEARCA Director Gil C. Saguiguit Jr. as a token of appreciation for SEARCA's work in agricultural development in his country. Looking on is Dr. Tin Htut (second from right), Permanent Secretary of MOAI, and Dr. Ye Tint Tun, Director General, MOAI Department of Agricultural Research, on his right.

change, land conversion and degradation, supply chain, and problems related to aging farmers and decreasing interest in farming. He also batted for seeds development and reserves.

The Minister also urged the Myanmar students, 18 of whom were SEARCA scholars, to uphold professionalism in their respective fields of specialization, perform outstandingly in their graduate programs, and bring back home

innovative technologies to improve their agriculture sector.

Minister Myint Hlaing invited Dr. Saguiguit to lead a SEARCA delegation to Myanmar to conceptualize and plan a focused program to address the ministry's priorities and concerns. Dr. Saguiguit assured him of SEARCA's continued support to Myanmar and to honor the invitation within the year. (LLDDomingo)

Inclusive agribusiness initiatives in SE Asia pushed

HO CHI MINH CITY, Vietnam—The results of a scoping study on the landscape of inclusive agribusiness in Southeast Asia conducted by SEARCA was presented at the *Roundtable on Inclusive Agribusiness in Southeast Asia* convened by Grow Asia, Food Systems Innovation, Seas of Change, Global Platform for Rural Development, and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade through the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO).

Held on 23-25 September 2015, the roundtable brought together more than 100 inclusive agribusiness practitioners, half of whom were from the private sector; the others were from farmers' groups, government, academe, civil society, and international development organizations. Inclusive agribusiness is one of SEARCA's strategic thrusts under its Tenth Five-Year Plan (2014-2019).

SEARCA's report, delivered by Dr. Nerlita M. Manalili, the study leader, focused on the status, trends, functions, shape, and factors supporting success of inclusive agribusiness in

the region, particularly in Indonesia, Myanmar, the Philippines, and Vietnam.

SEARCA also shared the session on comparing country contexts of inclusive agribusiness with Dr. Paul S. Teng of Nanyang Technological University, who is also a SEARCA Senior Fellow. He introduced a framework for analyzing the enablers of inclusive agribusiness which come in multiple dimensions and at different scales. These two presentations set the stage for the subsequent concurrent country sessions.

The discussions and sharing of successes, lessons learned, challenges, and opportunities for sustainable agricultural growth revolved around the following themes: viable inclusive business models, delivering impact at scale, integrating women in inclusive business, financing smallholders and inclusive agribusiness in the region, and policy innovation for inclusive agribusiness at scale.

The priority action points identified include making farmers' voices be heard; collecting



Dr. Nerlita M. Manalili presents the results of the SEARCA scoping study on inclusive agribusiness in Southeast Asia.

evidences, monitoring and evaluation; small and medium enterprise (SME) engagement; public-private partnership models; inclusiveness metrics; value chain financing; trade implications; case studies; policy research; and community of practice. (Report from BMBurgos)

Southeast Asia food reserves study ongoing

A comparative study that is looking at food stocks and reserves in Southeast Asian countries is being conducted by SEARCA and members of the Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC).

Titled *Food Reserves: A Comparative Study on Food Reserve Management and Policies in Southeast Asia*, the study is carried out under SEARCA's *Umbrella Program on Food and Nutrition Security for Southeast Asia 2014-2019*, which was adopted in August 2014 by the UC. Dr. Paul Teng of the Center for Non-Traditional Security Studies of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University (RSIS/NTS) and SEARCA's Senior Fellow on Food Security serves as the principal researcher.

Given the potential role that stocks and reserves can play to stabilize food availability at the individual country and regional level, Dr. Teng said it is important to study the policies, processes, and technologies that allow this to be a viable strategy in Southeast Asia. The main sources of making food available in most Southeast countries are what he called "food taps" composed of "self production, imports via trade, contract farming, stocks and reserves, and food aid."

Rice was chosen as the starting point of the research because anecdotal information shows that countries stockpile food, particularly rice, in different modalities and adopt a mix of trade instruments.

Specifically, the study aims to define and determine the importance of keeping food stocks and reserves, and the rationale behind countries'

decision to stockpile. It will also identify commodities that countries stockpile and the modalities and mechanisms of food stockpiling that have been adopted, including physical, virtual, trade, national, and regional mechanisms. To be examined too are the implications of a changing regional trade regime on a country's food stocks, as well as the impact of individual countries' food reserves on a regional stockpiling mechanism such as the ASEAN Plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve (APTERR). The feasibility of establishing other types of regional stockpiles beyond reserves will also be explored.

In addition to the survey to be conducted in the 11 Southeast Asian countries, SEARCA will organize a workshop involving all countries to determine the role of food reserve management and policies in the region and identify implications of a changing regional trade regime (e.g., AEC 2015) on a country's food stocks. (Report from SCSimondac)

Collaborative RDE program on climate change among APEC members planned



MANILA, Philippines – A symposium/workshop to plan a collaborative research, development, and extension program on climate change among Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) members was sponsored by a SEARCA-implemented project funded by the Department of Agriculture (DA) of the Philippines.

The *Symposium/Workshop on Planning a Collaborative RDE Program on Climate Change among APEC Member Economies* was held in the Manila Peninsula Hotel on 16-18 September 2015. It was organized by the DA-Bureau of Agricultural Research.

The meeting aimed to share information on technologies and strategies on climate change adaptation and mitigation, identify RDE gaps, as well as develop priority areas and joint RDE

agenda among APEC member economies and enabling mechanisms for RDE implementation.

Participants from APEC members were nationals of Chile, People's Republic of China, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, and the United States. Their participation was sponsored by the DA-funded *Adaptation and Mitigation Initiative on Agriculture (AMIA Project 1)* implemented by SEARCA through its Project Development and Technical Services (PDTs) and the University of the Philippines Los Baños Foundation, Inc. (UPLBFI). Other attendees were from CGIAR international research centers and SEARCA.

Led by Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, the Center's delegation included Dr. Bessie M. Burgos, Program Head for Research and Development; Dr. Lope B. Santos III, Program

Specialist and Officer in Charge, PDTs; Ms. Carmen Nyhria G. Rogel and Mr. Henry M. Custodio, both Program Specialists, R&D Department; and Ms. Nancy Landicho-de Leon, Program Specialist; Ms. Imelda L. Batangantang, Program Associate; Mr. Alvin G. Tallada, Project Coordinator; and Mr. Jerrel Edric B. Mallari, Project Support Staff, all of PDTs.

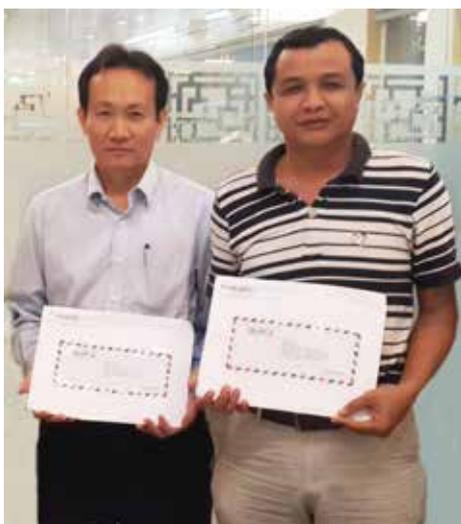
At the plenary session, SEARCA presented the collaborative framework for its Umbrella Program on Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation (CChAM) for Southeast Asia. Dr. Burgos delivered the presentation, which detailed the umbrella program's overall framework and strategic themes that will serve as platform for collaborative R&D, knowledge management, and capacity development on climate change adaptation and resilience in Southeast Asia. (AGTallada)

NU-SEARCA scholarships awarded

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia—Two officials of Cambodia's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) were awarded scholarships under the Nagoya University (NU)-SEARCA Joint PhD Research Scholarship project to enable them to pursue their PhD at the Nagoya University Satellite Campus for Bio-agricultural Sciences based at the Royal University of Agriculture (RUA) here.

The new scholars are Mr. Bun Chan, Deputy Director of the National Veterinary Research Institute, and Mr. Ngin Chhay, Director of the MAFF Rice Crop Department. The specialization of the former is animal production sciences and the latter, plant pathology. They were selected from among mid- and senior level executives in MAFF who are engaged in framing policies or researchers/technical staff working in agriculture and veterinary science.

The joint scholarship provides a stipend, dissertation research fund of US\$4,000, and travel fund during fieldwork in Cambodia. It is tenable at the NU Satellite Campus for



New NU-SEARCA scholars Mr. Ngin Chhay (left) and Mr. Bun Chan hold their scholarship award letters.

three years. The aim is to contribute to the development of high-quality agricultural human resources in Cambodia by enabling at least four PhD candidates from MAFF to pursue the NU Transnational PhD Program at the NU Satellite Campus in RUA. (Report from JSLaranas)

SEARCA joins planning for climate projections consortium

BALI, Indonesia—SEARCA participated in a workshop that elicited current work on knowledge management and information sharing on climate change in Southeast Asia. Held here on 1 July 2015, the planning workshop was devoted to consulting and discussing with stakeholders the outputs, work plan, resource allocation, and documentation of a Regional Climate Projections Consortium and Data Facility (RCC) funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

Australia-based Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO) was commissioned by ADB to develop the RCC, which will build regional capability—initially in Southeast Asia—to develop, access, interpret, and apply climate change data and information. CSIRO presented the 18-month ADB Technical Assistance (TA) project to support efforts of the three pilot countries to better manage climate risks by providing scientifically sound and decision-oriented climate data and projections; and enhancing their technical capacity to generate, interpret, and apply climate information.

According to Dr. Jack Katzfey, senior climate specialist at CSIRO and TA project leader, the vision of the TA is to build a Regional Climate

Consortium that will be the main provider of information on climate and impact assessment in the Asia-Pacific Region. It will feature a portal that would provide a window for knowledge products and advice, current and future climate information, and vulnerability and impact assessment information.

The implementing agencies of the project include the meteorological/weather bureau agencies in its three pilot countries, namely: Department of Science and Technology-Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (DOST-PAGASA) in the Philippines, Badan Meteorologi Klimatologi dan Geofisika (BMKG) in Indonesia, and the Thai Meteorological Department (TMD) in Thailand.

Present in the meeting were national consultants and invited stakeholders from Indonesia's State Ministry of National Development Planning (BAPPENAS); Manila Observatory, PAGASA, Oscar M. Lopez Center on Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management (OML Center), GIZ/Climate Change Commission of the Philippines, Chiang Mai University and Kasetsart University in Thailand, and SEARCA, among others. (Report from MCHCadiz)

UC adopts umbrella program on CChAM

SELANGOR, Malaysia—The SEARCA-initiated Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC) has adopted the Umbrella Program on Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation for Southeast Asia (CChAM) during its special meeting held at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) here on 14 August 2015.

With SEARCA as its secretariat since its launch in 1989, the UC is a strong network of seven universities in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Canada, Germany, and Japan. SEARCA has served as the consortium secretariat since 1989.

The umbrella program is intended as a platform for collaborative research, knowledge management, and capacity development on climate change adaptation and resiliency in Southeast Asia. It has four thematic areas, 21 sub-themes, and 70 projects and activities.

Dr. Juan M. Pulhin, Professor at the University of the Philippines-College of Forestry and Natural Resources and a SEARCA Adjunct Fellow, serves as Technical Coordinator of the Umbrella Program on CChAM. He presented the framework for collaboration, key thematic areas, sub-themes and projects of the umbrella program.

Anchored on the ASEAN Multi-sectoral Framework on Climate Change (AFCC), the Umbrella Program on CChAM is reflective of areas where institutions can work together, pool resources, and address gaps or move in directions where their joint efforts in R&D provide a strategic advantage for climate resiliency in the region. Crafting the umbrella program involved a review of existing climate change program frameworks; survey among UC members and other partner universities and development institutions; and a consultation-workshop co-organized by SEARCA with the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), Vietnam's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), and CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS).

In the same meeting, the UC reviewed the progress of seven collaborative projects under the Umbrella Program on Food and Nutrition Security that it adopted in August 2014. Implemented by two or more UC members, these projects are focused on food reserves, indigenous crops, postharvest system improvement, implications of ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) on regional food and nutrition security (FNS), enhancing human resources for regional FNS, and knowledge center on FNS. (JSLaranas)

SEARCA attends CIRDAP regional policy dialogue

NADI, Fiji—Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, attended the 7th Regional Policy Dialogue (RPD-7) and the 20th Regular Meeting of the Governing Council (GC-20) of the Centre of Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) held here on 17-21 August 2015.

SEARCA was invited to join the meetings as observer upon the recommendation in the 2013 CIRDAP meetings held in Delhi, India that SEARCA be a member of CIRDAP's Technical Committee for the next two years. SEARCA also joined the 29th CIRDAP Technical Committee Meeting (TC-29) and International Workshop on Best Practices held in September 2014 in Hanoi, Vietnam.

Bangladesh-based CIRDAP is a regional intergovernmental and autonomous organization established in 1979 with 15 member countries (i.e., Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Iran, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam), seven of which are also served by SEARCA. In view of this, CIRDAP and SEARCA signed a formal agreement in July



Dr. Saguiguit (right) confers with Dr. Cecep Effendi, CIRDAP Director General, about collaborative activities in countries common to both institutions.

2014 to collaborate in developing joint programs, projects, and other related activities in capacity building and research as well as exchange knowledge resources.

With Dr. Saguiguit at the Fiji meetings was Ms. Adoracion T. Robles, Unit Head for Management Services and Executive Coordinator, Office of the Director. (LLDDomingo)

Congressional committee raises concern on low enrollment in agriculture

MANILA, Philippines—The downward trend in enrollment in agriculture courses poses a serious concern to the agriculture sector, which is responsible for supporting the country's growing demand for food, fuel, and feeds. This was raised by Congresswoman Estrellita B. Suansing at the Congressional Committee on Higher and Technical Education (CHTE) meeting held on 18 August 2015.

SEARCA was invited to the meeting to present its position on House Resolution 589, an inquiry into the decreasing number of licensed agriculturists and students who are pursuing career in agriculture.

SEARCA confirmed that enrollment in agriculture and related courses indeed declined by 1.5 percent on average each year, citing findings of a 2013 study on trends, prospects, and policy directions in higher education in agriculture by the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) and the Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCAARRD). Even so, a SEARCA study projected that the demand for agriculture products continues to increase as Filipinos seek more sustainable, nutritious, and safe food. Such

demand should correspondingly increase the need for agricultural professionals.

The PIDS/PCAARRD study also showed that unemployment is a problem among graduates of agriculture, forestry, and natural resources (AFNR) as well as those of other colleges. SEARCA agrees with the study's inference that the limited employability of AFNR graduates is less likely a supply problem than a result of a shifting demand in the job market as the country's agri-based economy becomes more industry- and service-oriented.

In view of this, SEARCA advocates for agricultural education in the country that focuses on creating business opportunities from agriculture and developing technical and entrepreneurial skills of students, which is also asserted in the PIDS/PCAARRD as part of its recommendation to rationalize the agricultural education system in the country. SEARCA pointed out that in light of the ASEAN Economic Community 2015 where production and trade will be borderless, the Philippines would benefit from broadening the domain of agriculture wherein perspectives and expertise of agriculture graduates encompass the whole value chain, not just production.

Suggested improvements on agricultural curricula include application of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) to agriculture data analytics and agricultural technology as well as providing space for transdisciplinary, problem- and practice-based approach to learning agricultural science and entrepreneurship.

Moreover, partnerships with government agencies and the private sector will give students opportunities for collaborative research and exposure to application of science and technology to real world problems.

Alternatively, new perspectives and ideas for innovation can be gained by allowing faculty and student mobility within and outside the country, SEARCA asserted.

With its mandate to link research to policy, SEARCA offered its services to coordinate additional research in aid of legislation as CHTE may find necessary. SEARCA can undertake studies piloting curricular reforms in agriculture or AFNR in partnership with selected universities undertaking R&D in inclusive and sustainable agricultural and rural development (ISARD). (LLDDomingo)

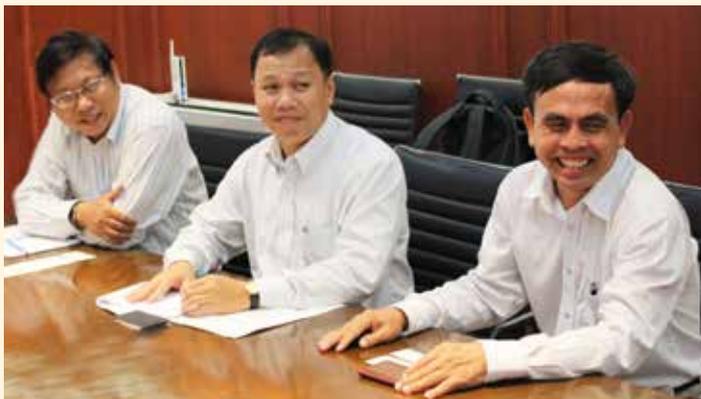
Snapshots



Governor Vilma Santos-Recto of Batangas, Philippines holds the replica of the Growth Monument, SEARCA's institutional symbol, presented to her by Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr. (left), SEARCA Director, after her lecture on leadership and governance—the first in the *Local Governance Lecture Series* jointly organized by the University of the Philippines Los Baños-College of Public Affairs and Development and SEARCA on 28 September 2015. Looking on is UPLB Chancellor Fernando C. Sanchez, Jr.



The "SEARCA jeepney" made of metal scraps (right) was the centerpiece of the SEARCA contingent in the foot parade commemorating the 400th founding anniversary of Los Baños and the 13th Bañamos Festival. Led by Dr. Saguiguit (front row, second from right in left photo), the Center staff joined more than 130 institutions, organizations, government agencies, and private entities in the parade that kicked off the week-long festivities.



Dr. Duong Duy Dong (rightmost), a SEARCA alumnus who is now the Vice Rector of Nong Lam University (NLU), Vietnam visited SEARCA on 2 September 2015. With him were Dr. Nguyen Ngoc Thuy (second from right), Head of the International Cooperation Office of NLU, and fellow Vietnamese from the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI). They were received by Dr. Saguiguit and SEARCA program heads and briefed on the Center's current priority thrusts and programs under its Tenth Five-Year Plan.

SEARCA staff dev't in full swing

The SEARCA Staff Development Program has been catering to staff needs for knowledge and skills improvement since July. The learning opportunities included various seminars and participation in the Staff Exchange Program of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO).

The topics of seminars attended covered strategic planning and budgeting, financial controls and audit of nongovernmental organizations, strategic crisis management and communication, payroll and withholding taxes, personal and organizational development through coaching and mentoring, and human resources technology.

The seminars were attended by Mr. Eduardo D. Rodriguez, Jr., Information Systems Associate, and Ms. Mary Ann R. Martinez, Budget and Management Specialist, both of the Management Services Unit (MSU); Ms. Eidelmine Elizabeth F. Genosa, HR Specialist and Officer in Charge, and Ms. Lovely Grace R. Urriza, HR Associate, both of the Human Resources Management Unit (HRMU), Mr. Arnel R. Oabina and Ms. Cirila B. Miranda, both Financial Analyst, and Mr. Rheden V. Rebong, Payroll Assistant, all of the Accounting Unit (ACU); and Ms. Imelda L. Batagantang,



Dr. Tinsiri Siribodhi (fourth from left), Deputy Director for Administration and Communication; Ms. Pornpatporn Wongwaitrakarn (leftmost), Finance Manager (second from right); Mrs. Natcha Kampiranond, Administration Manager; and Mrs. Patcharakarn Waritnankul (rightmost), Finance Officer, all of SEAMES, together with the visiting SEARCA staff, namely: Ms. Cirila B. Miranda and Ms. Mary Ann R. Martinez (second and third from left) and Mr. Eduardo D. Rodriguez, Jr. and Ms. Marites U. Suarez (third and fourth from right).

Program Associate, Project Development and Technical Services (PDTs).

On the other hand, the SEAMEO Staff Exchange Program activities consisted of a visit to the SEAMEO Secretariat (SEAMES) in Bangkok, Thailand and to the SEAMEO Regional Center for Educational Innovation and Technology (INNOTECH) in Quezon City. During the visits, the SEARCA staff were oriented on the practices and procedures of SEAMES and INNOTECH as they relate to their respective work areas. They also participated in discussions on management

systems that may be applicable to both SEARCA and the organizations they visited.

The SEARCA delegation to SEAMES included Ms. Martinez; Mr. Rodriguez; Ms. Miranda; and Ms. Marites U. Suarez, Administrative Support Staff, General Services Unit (GSU). On the visit to INNOTECH, they were joined by Ms. Genosa; Ms. Urriza; Mr. Renz B. Tabadero, Management Information Systems Assistant, and Mr. John Kenneth G. Abella, Programmer, both of MSU; and Ms. Elma M. Banzuela, Purchasing Assistant, GSU. (LLDDomingo)

2 SEARCA projects proposed under SEAMEO College

BANGKOK, Thailand—A Participatory Action Research on School- and Community-based Food and Nutrition Program for Literacy, Poverty Reduction, and Sustainable Development as well as the Establishment of the SEAMEO Centers Policy Research Network (CPRN) were proposed by Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, at the *SEAMEO College Planning Meeting* held here on 29-30 September 2015.

The projects are two of 13 activities identified for implementation under the SEAMEO College, a regional platform that addresses specific challenges confronting high-level education leaders and practitioners in the region.

The participatory action research project takes off from the SEARCA-initiated *School-based Food and Nutrition Program*, which aims to improve the nutritional condition and dietary habits of school-

aged children by increasing production of locally adapted vegetables through school gardening with the end goal of contributing to the community's food and nutrition security.

On the other hand, the proposed CPRN aims to enhance relevance and sharpen responsiveness of SEAMEO centers and the SEAMEO Secretariat (SEAMES) to the needs of education leaders for policy research to address regional human resource development issues in Southeast Asia.

SEARCA's delegation to the meeting also included Dr. Maria Celeste H. Cadiz, Program Head, Knowledge Management Department (KMD) and Ms. Adoracion T. Robles, Unit Head, Management Services, and Executive Coordinator, Office of the Director.



Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr. (second from left), SEARCA Director, with Dr. Gatot Hari Priowirjanto (rightmost), SEAMES Director; Dr. Tinsiri Siribodhi, SEAMES Deputy Director for Administration and Communication, second from right; and Dr. Wahyudi (leftmost), Deputy Director of SEAMEO Regional Centre for Quality Improvement of Teachers and Education Personnel (QITEP) in Mathematics, at the SEAMEO College Planning Meeting on 29-30 September 2015. (Photo courtesy of Tinsiri Siribodhi)

Launched in March 2013, the SEAMEO College conducts a series of forums and research and development activities on innovation in education and human resource development toward the realization of the ASEAN Community. (EGPandanan)

Myanmar GB Member visits SEARCA

Myanmar is now focused on improving its rice industry, the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation (MOAI) is looking to SEARCA for assistance in graduate education and short-term training to produce new rice breeders, scientists, and researchers (see related story on page 3).

This was underscored by Dr. Ye Tint Tun, Director General, MOAI Department of Agricultural Research and Country Representative of Myanmar to the SEARCA Governing Board, on his first visit to SEARCA on 11 September 2015. With him were two representatives from Myanmar's private sector and Dr. Romeo V. Labios of the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI)-Myanmar Office. They were received and briefed on SEARCA and its programs by Dr. Bessie M. Burgos and Dr. Maria Cristeta N. Cuaresma, Program Heads for Research and Development and Graduate Education and Institutional Development, respectively, along with Ms. Adoracion T. Robles, Unit Head for Management Services and Executive Coordinator, Office of the Director; Dr. Mariliza V. Ticsay, Unit Head for Knowledge Resources; and other key SEARCA staff.

In particular, Dr. Ye Tint Tun said MOAI is in need of a scholarship program that will enhance the



During his first visit to SEARCA on 11 September 2015, Dr. Ye Tint Tun (leftmost) elaborated on the need of MOAI for a scholarship program that will enhance human resources in rice breeding, production, and postharvest.

country's human resources along the rice value chain, specifically in rice breeding, production, and postharvest. He added that Yezin Agricultural University (YAU), Myanmar's only agricultural university, needs to update and improve its curricula.

Dr. Burgos reaffirmed SEARCA's readiness to help YAU in its curriculum enhancement initiatives as part of its Institutional Development

Assistance (IDA) Program which has included the university among its beneficiaries since 2012. At present, two YAU faculty members are pursuing PhD studies under SEARCA scholarship. SEARCA is also helping YAU look for funds to support its Development Plan, which is envisioned to enable the university to effectively support the agricultural development agenda of MOAI. (LLDDomingo)

Malaysia, Myanmar proposals push social forestry

A road map on social forestry and enhancements to the national social forestry framework are proposed by Malaysian and Myanmar participants, respectively, who attended Proposal Development Assistance (PDA) workshops conducted by the ASEAN Social Forestry Network (ASFN) Strategic Response Fund (ASRF)

As a partner in Phase II of the ASEAN-Swiss Partnership on Social Forestry and Climate Change (ASFCC), SEARCA implements the ASRF, which supports in-country initiatives that will enable the AMS focal points to quickly respond to emerging issues and challenges on food security, poverty, and climate change and increase their ability to articulate policy recommendations and directions.

The PDA workshop series aims to assist ASEAN Member States (AMS) in developing project proposals that would respond to the needs of the ASFN Focal Points in addressing emerging issues related to social forestry in their respective countries.

National definition

At the workshop in Kepong, Selangor, Malaysia on 11-13 August 2015, the participants proposed to craft a road map on social forestry in Malaysia that includes a national definition of “social

forestry” that is agreed on by the three states of Peninsular Malaysia, Sarawak, and Sabah. It was noted during the workshop that such national definition would greatly push forward efforts to promote social forestry in the country. The proponents plan to conduct consultations both at the state and national levels to enable multi-stakeholder participation in the formulation of the national definition of social forestry and the road map.

The workshop participants were from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE), Forestry Department of the three states (Peninsular Malaysia, Sarawak, and Sabah), academe, and community. Mr. Borhanudin Arshad, Deputy Director General of Forestry Department, Peninsular Malaysia, facilitated the workshop with guidance from Ms. Amy M. Lecciones, ASRF Regional Coordinator.

Improved national framework

On the other hand, participants of the workshop held at the Forest Research Institute in Nay



Participants tackle the status and challenges of social forestry in Malaysia during the focus group discussion.

Pyi Taw, Myanmar on 7-9 July 2015 proposed to enhance the 1995 Community Forestry Instruction (CFI) of Myanmar to help strengthen social forestry in the country.

The CFI defines the scope of social forestry in Myanmar and primarily focuses on providing basic needs for the local communities. Revising the CFI to include recent policy reforms and Millennium Development Goals (e. g., food security, poverty reduction, climate change adaptation) is seen as key to achieving the target of establishing 900,000 hectares of social forestry areas by 2031 as indicated in Myanmar’s National Forestry Master Plan.

The workshop was facilitated by Mr. Kyaw Moe Aung with Ms. Lecciones. The participants were from the Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry (MOECF) central office, Forest Department, Forest Research Institute, and University of Forestry, as well as representatives of communities from the Wundwin Township. (Reports from AMLecciones)



Myanmar participants brainstorm on their proposal.

SEARCA joins ASFCC workshop

KRABI, Thailand—SEARCA joined the 2nd ASEAN-Swiss Partnership on Social Forestry and Climate Change (ASFCC) Learning Group (LG) Workshop. Organized by the Center for People and Forests (RECOFTC) and funded by ASFN, the workshop was held here on 17-20 August 2015.

With the theme *Ensuring grassroots equity and gender in the forests and climate change context in ASEAN countries*, the workshop provided participants a platform for sharing and learning on subject of the theme.

Participants were researchers, community practitioners, development managers, and government officials from Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam; and ASFN Secretariat representatives. Ms. Rosario B. Bantayan, Program Specialist for Knowledge Management, represented SEARCA in the workshop along with focal persons of two other implementing partners: Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and Non-Timber Forest Product-Exchange Programme (NTFP-EP) South and Southeast Asia.

The participants shared their perspectives on the importance of social equity and gender in sustainable forest management (SFM). They also described existing initiatives or mechanisms that ensure grassroots equity and gender inclusion in their country’s forest sector. Considering the key equity elements in SFM, they also identified the biggest challenges in implementation in their country’s context.

The participants also visited the mangrove forest restoration projects in Baan Khlong Yang, Koh Lanta District and Baan Khlong Prasong, all in Krabi Province. (Report from AMLecciones)

Phl agri officers learn systematic climate change mainstreaming

SEARCA conducted a training-workshop on *Integrating Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) into Policies, Plans and Programs in Agriculture* for key government staff in the Department of Agriculture-Adaptation and Mitigation Initiative in Agriculture (DA-AMIA) teams, DA regional field offices (RFOs), and attached agencies and corporations. AMIA is one of DA's seven systems-wide programs on climate change and is the umbrella program for mainstreaming climate change in agriculture across all programs, functions, and agencies of DA.

Ms. Perla Baltazar of the Systems-Wide Climate Change Office (SWCCO) said the training is important in equipping the DA with a "climate lens" to effectively achieve the goals of AMIA.

The customized training, held on 4-7 August 2015, was the first in a series of three, which aims to enable the agriculture staff to understand

climate change impacts and the need for mainstreaming; identify appropriate approaches for integrating climate change adaptation into development policies and investment plans at the national, sectoral, and project levels; and apply the systematic planning steps to selected cases in agriculture and fisheries towards developing flagship applications of climate proofing

The training was based on the systematic methodology for integrating climate change adaptation into policies, plans and programs developed and widely tested by the German Agency for International Cooperation (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH or GIZ) based on an Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Policy Guidance on mainstreaming climate change into development cooperation. SEARCA adopted the four core modules on the systematic approach to integrating climate change adaptation in development planning.

AMIA consultation workshops

In July 2015, SEARCA and the University of the Philippines Los Baños Foundation Inc. (UPLBFI) co-organized a *Regional Consultation Workshop* for 15 regional field offices of the Philippine Department of Agriculture (DA) back-to-back with a *National Consultation Workshop* for key officials of 17 DA attached agencies and Central Office departments. The workshops included a briefing about the AMIA-Project 1 and discussions on the terms of reference and work plans of each component, overall project management, and the AMIA program development framework.

Dr. Segfredo R. Serrano, DA Undersecretary for Policy, Planning, Research and Regulation, stressed the importance of integrating climate science in development projects. While it is important to identify the issues to better determine the solutions, he said it is equally necessary to integrate every effort on the ground. He added that surviving is not enough and there is a need to make most of the resources at hand to better achieve national goals and ensure sustainability of current efforts.

The three activities were all conducted under the auspices of the DA project titled *Strengthening Implementation of Adaptation and Mitigation Initiative in Agriculture (AMIA)-Project 1*, which is being implemented by SEARCA, through its Project Development and Technical Services, and UPLBFI. (Reports from CCPulumbait/NMLandicho-de Leon)



Using the participatory training methodology prescribed by the GIZ course guide, Dr. Daylinda B. Cabanilla (standing), facilitates a session. Dr. Cabanilla of the UPLB College of Forestry and Natural Resources served as technical coordinator of the training on CCA integration.

SEARCA takes part in ASK Asia event

PRAGUE, Czech Republic—As higher education institutions (HEI) intensify their efforts to provide quality global education, they need to make sure that their students get employed after completing their study programs.

This was the essence of the *Agriculture, Skills and Knowledge (ASK) Asia*, a research project supported by the Erasmus Mundus Action (EMA) 3 that aimed to evaluate the competitiveness of Erasmus Mundus alumni in the field of agriculture and related life sciences through their experiences and the expectations of their employers in Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Mongolia, Thailand, and Vietnam.

The *ASK Asia Workshop* on "Employability of Erasmus Mundus alumni and new approaches of Erasmus +" was hosted by the Czech University of Life Sciences where more than 70 participants

from Asia and Europe gathered on 21-23 September 2015.

With nearly 50 years working in scholarship management and administration, SEARCA was among the stakeholders invited to share learnings and experiences in the management of capacity building activities, including strategies for alumni relations.

Represented by Ms. Jesselle S. Laranas, Program Specialist for Graduate Education and Institutional Development, SEARCA shared the perceived benefits of the scholarship and the graduate study according to its scholarship alumni and their organizations. These included horizontal and soft skills such as flexibility and resourcefulness, networking, and intercultural communication, which were echoed by other stakeholders at the workshop.

Moreover, participants found that they faced the same challenge of intensifying marketing and dissemination of their programs to Asians, who typically prefer to pursue their graduate education in the US, Australia, and Japan. It was thus surmise that in addition to online promotion and tapping alumni as brand ambassadors, the need for face-to-face interaction with the target beneficiaries through roadshows and fairs is inevitable.

Through the Ask Asia Workshop, SEARCA and other stakeholders established new networks, strengthened existing partnerships, and identified future collaborative projects and activities on a global scale but with national impact. (Report from JSLaranas)

39 SEARCA scholars earn MS, PhD degrees

In academic year 2014/2015, 39 SEARCA scholars completed their graduate programs at various Southeast Asian universities.

Among those who graduated from the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB), Ms. Maria Anabelle D. Gerona, PhD in development communication, was the top PhD student in the Class of 2015. Ms. Gerona also received the Academic Excellence Award during the UPLB Graduate School Hooding and Recognition Ceremonies held the day before the UPLB Commencement Exercises on 4 July 2015.

Two other SEARCA scholars were recognized for their outstanding academic achievements during the recognition rites. Ms. Maria Theresa R. Sawit, MS in community development, was the College of Public Affairs and Development's Academic Awardee for the master's level. On the other hand, Mr. Kolakanh Chanthavongsa garnered the Best MS Thesis award.

Of the 39 completed scholars who are now called SEARCA graduate alumni, 25 graduated from UPLB; three each from Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB) in Indonesia and Kasetsart University (KU) and Chiang Mai University (CMU) in Thailand; two each from Khon Kaen University (KKU) in Thailand and Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM); and one each from the UP Diliman (UPD) and Tokyo University of Agriculture (Tokyo NODAI).

Among the graduates, 14 were supported by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada through the IDRC-SEARCA Scholarships for Upland Agriculture and Food Security and six were supported by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). In addition, one scholar was jointly supported by Tokyo NODAI and another one by the Philippine Department of Agriculture (DA). The rest were fully funded by SEARCA, three of whom were PhD research scholars who were granted funds to support their dissertation research.

The new SEARCA graduate alumni and their nationality, title of thesis/dissertation, study post, degree program are as follows:

CAMBODIA (10)

- Mr. Chim Chay, "Quality Evaluation of Rice Wine Using Isolated Microorganisms from 'Me Dombae' A Starter Culture from Cambodia" (*UPLB/PhD, food science*)
- Mr. Ou Ratanak, "Estimating Impacts of Ecotourism and NTFPs on Livelihoods and Biodiversity Conservation in Cambodia" (*Tokyo NODAI/PhD, agricultural engineering*)
- Ms. Chin Hunlay, "Production Performance and Intestinal Microstructure of Broiler Chickens

Supplemented with Methionine" (*UPLB/MS, animal science*)

- Mr. Eng Chheanghong, "Food and Nutrition Security of Farming Households with 2 to 5-year-old Children as Influenced by Selected Governance Factors in Chet Borei District, Kratie Province, Cambodia" (*UPLB/MS, applied nutrition*)
- Mr. Long Huot, "Marketing of Maize in Ratanak Mondol District, Battambang Province, Cambodia" (*UPLB/MS, agricultural economics*)
- Ms. Ong Socheath, Management of Whitefly Vected Viruses in Tomato and Chili Production (*UPLB/MS, plant pathology*)
- Mr. Sambo Pheap, Measurement of Mineralization Rates of Different Organic Sources and Their Effect on Soil Chemical Properties and Growth Performance of Corn (*Zea mays L.*) (*UPLB/MS, soil science*)
- Mr. Thea Sive, "Growth, Nitrogen Uptake and Yield of Upland Rice (*Oryza sativa L.*) Varieties as Affected by Biochar" (*UPLB/MS, agronomy*)
- Mr. Val Sophal, "Agronomic and Yield Response of Three Upland Rice Varieties to Varying Bio-N and Inorganic Nitrogen Fertilizer Combinations in Ratanakiri Province, Cambodia" (*UPLB/MS, agronomy*)
- Ms. Vong Pisey, "Effects of Lactation Period on Nutrient Content of Milk from Holstein-Friesian x Sahiwal Cows (*Bos taurus x Bos indicus*)" (*UPLB/MS, animal science*)

INDONESIA (3)

- Mr. Riza Firmansyah, "Development of Sustainable Coastal Tourism Pathek Situbondo" (*IPB/MS, natural resource and environmental management*)
- Ms. Tika Tresnawati, "Communication Pattern in the Diffusion of Transgenic Potato Seed at Garut and Pangalengan, Indonesia" (*IPB/MS, communication of rural and agricultural development*)
- Ms. Hari Sulistiyowati, "Appraising Ecological Value of Tropical Forest Ecosystem Carbon Pools at Meru Betiri National Park, Indonesia" (*UPLB/PhD, botany*)

LAO PDR (4)

- Mr. Khamniem Phongtady, "Role of Women in Organic Rice Production: A Case Study in Phoukoud District, Xiengkhouang Province Northern Lao PDR" (*KKU/MS, rural development management*)
- Mr. Kolakanh Chanthavongsa, "Household and Community Level Practices Toward Native Rice Sufficiency in Khoun District, Xiengkhouang Province, Lao PDR" (*UPLB/MS, community development*)
- Mr. Phansamay Inphomma, "Resettlement Outcomes and Restoration of Resettled Households' Livelihood in Khamkeut District,



Ms. Maria Theresa R. Sawit (right), UPLB College of Public Affairs and Development's Academic Awardee for the master's level, with fellow SEARCA scholar Ms. Vong Pisey just before the UPLB Graduate School Hooding and Recognition Ceremonies.

Borikhamxay Province, Lao PDR" (*UPLB/MS, community development*)

- Mr. Soulivanh Voravong, "Watershed Management for Controlling Water Quality" (*KU/MS, environmental science*)

MYANMAR (5)

- Ms. Lwin Mar Oo, "Grain-Filling Rate and Yield in Two Rice (*Oryza Sativa L.*) Varieties Based on Critical Period of Weed Control" (*UPM/MS, agronomy*)
- Ms. Myint Thu Thu Aung, "Specialization of Trade Based on Geographical Location" (*UPLB/MS, agricultural economics*)
- Ms. Than Htwe, "Physiological Response of Submerged Rice (*Oryza sativa L.*) Under Varying Phosphorus and Potassium Concentrations" (*UPLB/MS, agronomy*)
- Ms. Wint Wint Aung, "Occurrence of Campylobacter Spp. And their Antibiotic Resistance ion Cattle and Farm Environment" (*UPM/MS, veterinary medicine*)
- Mr. Ye Min Htwe, "Auto-Ecology and Utilization of *Zingiber barbatum* Wall in Mt. Popa, Central Myanmar" (*UPLB/MS, botany*)

PHILIPPINES (6)

- Ms. Maria Anabelle D. Gerona, "Communication in Watershed Management Organization in the Philippines" (*UPLB/PhD, development communication*)
- Mr. Roland M. Hipol, "Fungal Endophytes and their Role in Metallphyte Tolerance to Heavy Metal Pollutants in Mankanyan, Benguet" (*UPLB/PhD, botany*)
- Ms. Teresa B. Olarte (*UPD/Master in development economics, non-thesis*)

39 SEARCA scholars/ to page 13

Alumni Notes

3 SEARCA ALUMNI ASSUME TOP UNIVERSITY POSTS

Three SEARCA alumni have recently been appointed as chief executives of universities in the Philippines and Indonesia.

New BulSU President

Dr. Cecilia N. Gascon (PhD, forestry, 1998) was elected as President of Bulacan State University (BulSU) by the BulSU Board of Regents. She assumed office on 1 September 2015.



Dr. Cecilia N. Gascon

As she takes on her new post, Dr. Gascon brings with her more than a decade of leadership experience from having served as President of the Southern Luzon State University (SLSU) since 2004. In the early years of her administration, the quality of education improved at then Southern Luzon Polytechnic University (SLPU) and she was able to push for it to become a state university in 2007. At BulSU, Dr. Gascon is intent on improving the quality of education. Her first step is to build the capacities of its teachers.

6th UEP President

Dr. Rolando A. Delorino (MS, environmental studies, 1988) was elected as the sixth President of the University of Eastern Philippines (UEP) in a unanimous vote by the UEP Governing Board. During his term, Dr. Delorino intends to “enhance

the relevance of UEP’s academic, research and extension programs in the light of national development thrusts and international standards; strengthen the University’s resource generation capacity in order to provide sustained support for the viable implementation of new and existing academic, research and extension programs, systems, procedures, and resources, in keeping with national thrusts on moral ascendancy; and broaden access to the University’s quality programs and services by the students, especially the poor but academically deserving, and the community.”



Dr. Rolando A. Delorino

Dr. Delorino served as UEP Vice President for Research and Extension prior to his appointment. He is the second SEARCA alumnus to become UEP President. Dr. Pedro D. Destura (PhD, agricultural education,

1978) served as UEP President from 1990 to 2007 and now holds the title of UEP Professor Emeritus.

UNU Indonesia Rector

Prof. Dr. M. Maksum Machfoedz was officially sworn in as Rector of Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama (UNU) Indonesia by Prof. Dr. KH Said Aqil Siroj, General Chairman of Nahdlatul Ulama, on 10 July 2015. Dr. Maksum said he envisions UNU Indonesia to become an outstanding university and the melting pot for the academic world, Islam, nationality, and struggle.



Dr. M. Maksum Machfoedz

Prior to assuming his new post, Dr. Maksum served as Professor at the Faculty of Agricultural Technology, Universitas Gadjah Mada in Yogyakarta. He also served NU in various capacities, including

Chairman of the Central Board for five years. Dr. Maksum was twice awarded the SEARCA scholarship, which enabled him to obtain PhD and MS in Agricultural Engineering (1989 & 1985) from the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB). (Reports from JSLaranas /Photos courtesy of BulSU, UEP, and Muslim Media News)

TIMOR-LESTE TO HOST 2ND RSFA REGIONAL CONFERENCE

DILI, Timor-Leste—The Government of Timor-Leste, Regional SEARCA Fellows Association (RSFA), and SEARCA Alumni Association of Timor-Leste (SAAT) are organizing the *2nd RSFA Regional Conference on Food Security, Poverty Reduction, and Climate Change Adaptation towards Sustainable Agricultural Productivity in Southeast Asia* to be held here on 8-9 October 2015.

The conference focuses on knowledge sharing of initiatives towards the capacity-building of smallholders in attaining food security, reducing poverty, and adapting to climate change.

The first RSFA conference was held in December 2013 in Vientiane, Lao PDR. (LLDDomingo)

39 SEARCA scholars/ from page 12

- Mr. Tomas Reyes, Jr., “Modelling and Evaluation of Risks from Water-induced Erosion and Landslide in Wahig-Inabanga Watershed Bohol, Philippines” (*UPLB/PhD, forestry*)
- Mr. Jonathan V. Sabiniano, “Quantitative Microbiological Risk Assessment on Salmonella spp in Pork Carcass” (*UPLB/MS, veterinary medicine*)
- Ms. Ma. Theresa R. Sawit, “Empowering the Mangyans Through the Implementation of Palayamanan Project in Occidental Mindoro, Philippines” (*UPLB, MS, community development*)

TIMOR-LESTE (1)

- Mr. Caetano Dos Santos Cristovao, “Efficiency Analysis of Organic Coffee with the Market Structure-Conduct-Performance Approach and Marketing Channel Choice in Ermera District, Timor-Leste” (*IPB/MS, agribusiness*)

VIETNAM (10)

- Ms. Bui Quy Hong, “Input and Output Commercialization Among Poor and Non-poor Lychee Farmers in Luc Ngan District, Bac Giang Province, Vietnam” (*UPLB/MS, agricultural economics*)
- Mr. Ho Trong Phuc, “Profit Efficiency of Hybrid Rice Production in the Central Vietnam” (*KU/MS, agricultural and resource economics*)
- Mr. Le Phuong Nam, “Determination of Farmers’ Demand on Agricultural Insurance in Milking-cow Production in Bavi District, Hanoi City” (*UPLB/MS, agricultural economics*)
- Ms. Nguyen Thi Bich Thuy, “The Integration of Regional Rice Markets in the Philippines” (*UPLB/MS, agricultural economics*)
- Ms. Nguyen Thi Chung, “Assessing Rice Farmers’ Use of Seasonal Weather Forecasts Data to Cope with Climate Variability in Central Highland of Vietnam” (*CMU/MS, agricultural systems management*)
- Ms. Nguyen Thi Ngoc Thuong, “The Livelihood of Farm-Households After The Land Revocation:

A Case Study in Song Khe Commune, Bac Giang City, Bac Giang Province, Vietnam” (*KKU/MS, rural development management*)

- Ms. Pham Thi Thuyen, “Farmers’ Perception and Adaptation to Climate Change Pressure on Highland Coffee Production, Dak Lak Province, Vietnam” (*CMU/MS, agricultural systems management*)
- Mr. Tran Cao Uy, “Farmers’ Perception and Adaptation to Drought in Maize Production, Dakrong District, Quang Tri Province, Vietnam” (*CMU/MS, agricultural systems management*)
- Ms. Tran Hoai Thao Trang, “Adoption of Aromatic Rice in Mekong Delta, Vietnam” (*KU/MS, agricultural and resource economics*)
- Ms. Tran Thi Thuong, “Expanding Market for Organic Vegetables in Hanoi Area” (*UPLB/MS, agricultural economics*)

At the end of AY 2014/2015, a total of 1,365 SEARCA graduate scholarships (814 MS, 551 PhD) had been completed. (Report from JSLaranas)

SEARCA organizes UC graduate forum

SELANGOR, Malaysia—SEARCA organized the *1st University Consortium Graduate Forum on Life Science, Food Science, and Agriculture (UCGF 2015)* hosted by Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) and attended by more than 40 graduate students, faculty, and officials from the five members of the Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC) located in Southeast Asia. Research papers life science, food science and agriculture were presented by 34 graduate students in parallel sessions on 10-11 August 2015.

Dr. Didier Pillot, Vice President of the European consortium Agrinatura, keynoted the forum. He discussed the current challenges and opportunities offered by student and faculty

mobilities. , and stressed that mobilities do not just result in the acquisition of technical skills but, more importantly, they should lead to new skills and competencies that can become useful tools in the student's professional life. Said tools include learning a foreign language and intercultural awareness, ability to adapt to changes and new situations, capacity to work in teams and deal with complex problems, capacity to think critically and communicate effectively, and the added value in the disciplinary progress.

Moreover, Dr. Pillot said universities cannot escape from internationalization. Since various emerging concerns occur at the regional level, organizing at the regional scale is a good starting point, especially as regards mutual recognition of courses, assessment schemes,

quality assurance, and other academic concerns. Harmonization, rather than standardization, may be more effective where the differences between universities are respected, but compatibility within the system is addressed.

The UCGF aims to provide an opportunity for graduate students from UC members to share new knowledge, research ideas, and experiences in an open platform; offer academic training and develop the next generations of scholars; encourage trans-disciplinary studies and promote greater integration of research through strategic partnership among the UC members; and strengthen the relationship between and among the UC members. The forum was held back-to-back with a UC special meeting (see related story on page 6). (JSLaranas)



Prof. Dato Dr. Mohd. Fauzi Hj. Ramlan (front row, seventh from right), UPM Vice Chancellor and incumbent Chair of the SEARCA Governing Board, and Dr. Didier Pillot (front row, seventh from left), Agrinatura Vice President, with the forum participants and organizers, including Dr. Maria Cristeta N. Cuaresma (front row, sixth from right), Program Head, and Ms. Jesselle S. Laranas (front row, third from right), Program Specialist, both of SEARCA's Graduate Education and Institutional Development Department.

New SEARCA scholars take customized English course

"This is just the beginning of your journey, and we hope that this training gave you confidence for the challenge ahead," Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, told 22 new SEARCA scholars at the end of their 10-day course *English for Academic Purposes*.

Conducted on 22-31 July 2015, the staple short course for SEARCA graduate scholars is intended to enhance the learning and participation of new students in their graduate programs. This is the third team up of the Singapore-based Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) Regional Language Centre (RELC) and SEARCA in offering the English course to SEARCA scholars. The lecturers were Dr. Fung Cheung Kam See and Ms. Elsa Yow of RELC. Participants were from Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Timor-Leste.

After the training, the scholars will begin their study programs at the University of the Philippines Los Baños, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Kasetsart



Dr. Fung Cheung Kam See (leftmost) and Ms. Elsa Yow (rightmost) of RELC with the SEARCA scholars who participated in the English course.

University in Thailand, and Universitas Gadjah Mada in Indonesia. (Report from JSLaranas)

Course on food value chain analysis completed

SEARCA organized a short course on *Methods and Approaches in Food Value Chain Analysis at the Firm-Farm Level* attended by 31 professors, graduate students, and practitioners from Southeast Asia. Held on 3-7 August 2015, the course looked into relevant dimensions of the food value chain, including the traditional and modern food value chains, challenges to sustainable food value chain analysis in Southeast Asia, and policymaking.

This course is especially critical in view of the ASEAN integration towards the end of this year, which aims to transform ASEAN into a single market and production base. Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, said at the opening program.

Noting that the participants came from diverse backgrounds and countries, he said “an extensive sharing of experiences is expected thereby enriching the learning from the course.”

Dr. Krissana Treesilvattanakul of the Department of Agro-industry Technology, Faculty of Agro-industry, Kasetsart University (KU), Thailand delivered the course, which was supported by the Food Security Center (FSC) of the University of Hohenheim, Germany. FSC is one of the five excellence centers of the program “Exceed-Higher Education Excellence in Development Cooperation,” supported by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) with funds from the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) of Germany. SEARCA has been a strategic partner of FSC since 2009. (Report from JSLaranas)



Dr. Krissana Treesilvattanakul of KU talks about the challenges to food value chain analysis in the region.

SEARCA trains farmers on poultry raising

CLAVERIA, Philippines—SEARCA trained 45 farmer cooperators on organic and scientific native chicken production at the Misamis Oriental State College of Agriculture and Technology (MOSCAT) here.

Held on 6 July 2015, the training was conducted under the project titled *Production of Organic Feeds for Native Chicken: A Pilot Corn/Sorghum + Cowpea Intercropping Scheme Integrated with Village Feed Milling and Native Chicken Production* that SEARCA implements in partnership with MOSCAT for the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Agricultural Research (DABAR) of the Philippines.

The training gave an overview of Philippine native animals, and their status and potentials. Other topics covered were science-enhanced native chicken production, health management of native chicken, feed production, and organic fertilizer production.

Dr. Agapita J. Salces, Poultry Nutritionist cum Animal Breeder; Dr. Jezie A. Acorda, Veterinarian; and Prof. Medardo G. Cosadio, faculty member of the MOSCAT Institute of Agriculture, served as the lead lecturers. (MBAmanza)

Organic vegetable projects bag R&D awards

Two projects on organic seed production won the 2015 R&D awards given by the Philippine Agriculture and Resources Research Foundation, Inc. (PARRFI) on 14 August 2015 at SEARCA—home of the annual *R&D Awarding and Closing Ceremonies* of the Los Baños Science Community’s (LBSC) celebration of the National Science and Technology Week called “Syensaya.” SEARCA and PARRFI are among the 22 member agencies of the LBSC Foundation Inc. (LBSCFI).

The project titled *Variety Evaluation, On-farm Trials and Seed Production of Organic Vegetables in Southern Luzon* by Dr. Rodel G. Maghirang, University Research at the University of the Philippines Los Baños-Institute of Plant Breeding (UPLB-IPB), and his team won in the research category. The project produced potential varieties of pole sitao, cucumber, lettuce, squash, tomato, and eggplant. According to Dr. Maghirang, “yield and overall performance of the developed varieties were observed to be at par or greater than the yield performance of commercial ones if grown under low input organic system.”

The R&D Award for the development category went to the project titled *Development of Organic Seed Production System of Lowland Vegetables and Legumes at the Bureau of Plant Industry-Los Baños National Crop Research, Development, and Production Support Center (BPI-LBNCRDPSC) and Strengthening Partnership in CALABARZON, MIMAROPA and Bicol Region* implemented by Dr. Herminigilda A. Gabertan and her team at BPI-LBNCRDC. The project produced organic seeds of bitter melon, bottle gourd, cowpea, cucumber, eggplant, mungbean, mustard, okra, pole sitao, soybean, sponge gourd, and tomato. It also trained more than 1,700 organic farmers on organic vegetable and seed production, and provided technical assistance and initial farm inputs.

The awards ceremony was keyed by 2015 Outstanding Youth Scientist Dr. Aimee Lynn



Ms. Maria Cielo Paola L. Bartolome (leftmost), a researcher representing the winning team from UPLB-IPB, proudly holds the PARRFI plaques of recognition. With her are (from right) Dr. Aimee Lynn Barrion-Dupo, Professor 3 and UP Scientist 1, UPLB-IBS; Dr. Lucrecio L. Rebugio, PARRFI Board Member; and Dr. Casiano S. Abrigo, Jr., UPLBFI Executive Director and LBSCFI President.

Barrion-Dupo, who is Professor 3 and UP Scientist 1 at the UPLB Institute of Biological Sciences (IBS). Recalling the African proverb “It takes a village to raise a child,” Dr. Dupo credited the “science village” that is LBSC for providing a nurturing environment for shaping the minds of scientists like her. Her message strongly resonated with the theme of this year’s Syensaya celebration—“Syensaya at Kabataan: #WOW TLG.” TLG stands for “Technology Leads to Globalization.” (LLDDomingo)

SEAMEO initiates regionalizing TVET in Southeast Asia

In sync with initiatives for ASEAN integration starting in 2015, the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) has spearheaded a series of meetings toward internationalization and harmonization of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in Southeast Asia.

Held on 24-26 August 2015 in Chiang Mai, Thailand, the first meeting among high officials announced a drive to expand collaboration on internationalization and harmonization of TVET in the region by identifying practical mechanisms and comprehensive action plans among priority industry sectors, namely: hospitality and tourism; electronics, mechatronics, manufacturing, and applied chemistry; agriculture and fisheries; construction/civil engineering; and commerce (banking).

The second workshop was held 10-12 September 2015 in Solo, Indonesia with almost 400 participants. It elicited commitments among participating TVET institutions and universities for cross-country teacher and student exchanges. It also introduced a plan to set up a Southeast Asian (SEA) TVET Consortium, which is a SEAMEO initiative. This meeting was hosted by the Directorate of Technical and Vocational Education of the Indonesia Ministry of Education and Culture. It was organized with the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) Regional Office in Indonesia as partner, and the SEAMEO Secretariat (SEAMES) based in Bangkok, Thailand and two SEAMEO regional centers as regional coordinators. These were the Brunei-based SEAMEO Regional Centre for Vocational and Technical Education and Training (VOCTECH) and the Indonesia-based SEAMEO Regional Open Learning Centre (SEAMOLEC). SEAMEO VOCTECH will lead SEAMEO's proposed SEA TVET Consortium.

In agriculture and fisheries, which is SEARCA's area of interest, Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, underscored the role of TVET in developing the region's human resources that can directly contribute to inclusive and sustainable



Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr. (second from right), SEARCA Director, and Ms. Adoracion T. Robles (rightmost), SEARCA Unit Head for Management Services and Executive Coordinator, at the Chiang Mai TVET meeting held on 24-26 August 2015. With them are Dr. Krissanapong Kirtikara (center), former Thailand Deputy Minister of Education; Dr. Tinsiri Siribodhi (second from left), SEAMES Deputy Director for Administration and Communication; and Dr. Juan Miguel M. Luz (leftmost), Associate Dean at the Asian Institute of Management Stephen Zuelling Graduate School of Development Management.



(From left) Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director; Dr. Abi Sujak, SEAMOLEC Interim Director; and Dr. Gatot Hari Priowirjanto, SEAMES Director, give their thumbs up for internationalizing and harmonizing TVET in Southeast Asia during the workshop in Solo, Indonesia.

agricultural and rural development (ISARD) in Southeast Asia. It is in this light that SEARCA participated in the two regional meetings even though TVET in agriculture and fisheries is not directly within its institutional strengthening and capacity development mandate.

Although SEARCA focuses on serving the higher education, research, and policy sectors, it will support TVET providers/institutions in curriculum/content development along the thrusts of ISARD where gaps in training content and trainer capacity may be found.

The promotion of TVET was identified as one of the priorities of education ministers in Southeast Asia during their Strategic Dialogue on 13 September 2014 in Vientiane, Lao PDR. Specifically, SEAMEO is promoting TVET among learners and their parents through more visible investments in the field, and improving relevance of the curricula to focus on creativity and innovation. The SEAMEO Strategic Dialogue of Education Ministers (SDEM) also agreed that TVET in the region can be enhanced through the development of a regional policy framework for labor, skills, and learner mobility. (MCHCadiz)