

# The SEARCA DIARY



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## CULTIVATING YOUNG MINDS IN SCHOOL GARDENS

Young students learn to be caretakers of the land, gain appreciation for agriculture, and develop healthy eating habits.

Photo by Arief Rakhman

## School Gardens: A food and nutrition program

The declining interest of youth in agriculture and malnutrition among schoolchildren are two of the pressing challenges in agriculture and rural development in Southeast Asia.

Convinced that healthy children are the foundation of a healthy society, SEARCA is collaborating with the Philippine Department of Education (DepEd), University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB), Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) College, and the provincial government of Laguna, Philippines on the *Participatory Action Research on School and Community-based Food and Nutrition Program for Literacy, Poverty Reduction, and Sustainable Development*.

The project is designed to encompass three interrelated areas of intervention: nutrition (improved food diversity and availability through school gardens), education (learning-by-doing food production activities), and economics (savings on food costs and added income). It will be piloted in five elementary schools and one high school in the province of Laguna. The pilot sites were selected based on track record of success and dedicated staff for implementing

## WHAT'S INSIDE

- 02 Timor-Leste ambassador lauds SEARCA's HRD programs
- 03 Australian, French envoys strengthen ties with SEARCA
- 04 OECD to tap SEARCA anew for ASEAN agri innovations study
- 04 44 academic execs attend LEAP Cambodia Partnership to boost SEA universities' research capacities
- 04 SEARCA to support joint scholarships on InterRisk Umbrella program on climate change in Southeast Asia crafted
- 06 2 Japanese universities explore collaboration with SEARCA
- 07 LGU, state college and SEARCA partner to boost calamansi industry
- 07 National agri, fisheries RDE agenda reviewed
- 08 Snapshots
- 09 SEARCA Director makes pitch for biodiversity in ASEAN meet
- 09 Honorary doctorate conferred on SEARCA Senior Fellow
- 09 Focus program agenda on current dev't issues, Saguiguit tells CAPSA
- 10 SEARCA drawn in as ASFCC gears up for Phase III
- 10 ASFN partners support Asia Pacific Forestry Week
- 11 PhI agri officials tour Thai model farms, agri learning centers
- 12 Alumni Notes
- 13 3rd annual IDRC-SEARCA confab convened SEARCA scholar shares views on what makes an industry leader
- 14 Acupuncture improves water buffalo fertility, milk production
- 14 DA trainers learn to facilitate systematic adaptation assessment
- 15 SEARCA project surveys rice, corn, and coconut farm areas
- 16 Indonesian tops SEARCA Photo Contest 2015



## Timor-Leste ambassador lauds SEARCA's HRD programs

His Excellency Juvencio De Jesus Martins, Ambassador of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste to the Philippines, met with Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, to express his appreciation to the Center for its significant contributions to human resource development (HRD) in agriculture in his country.

Accompanied by Mr. Vasco Viana, Education Attaché at the Embassy of Timor-Leste in the Philippines during his visit to SEARCA on 26 February 2016, the ambassador shared their government's plan to strengthen the agriculture, fisheries, and tourism sectors. He said this may offer windows for further cooperation between SEARCA and Timor-Leste.

Dr. Saguiguit briefed Ambassador Martins about SEARCA and its programs and activities, particularly its institutional development

assistance (IDA) to Universidade Nacional Timor Lorosa'e (UNTL). Under IDA, SEARCA is helping build up UNTL to become the "go-to" institution in addressing the HRD needs in the country's agriculture sector.

The ambassador commended the Center for its Graduate Education and Institutional Development Program, under which it has awarded 49 graduate scholarships to Timorese, at least seven of whom are holding key posts in government and UNTL.

He said the Timorese SEARCA alumni will be tapped to support the national government through the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) in providing policy recommendations and



Timor-Leste Ambassador Juvencio De Jesus Martins (left) with Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director

guidance on issues related to agricultural and rural development.

Prior to his visit to SEARCA, Ambassador Martins came to Los Baños on 24 January 2016 to meet with Timorese SEARCA scholars pursuing PhD and master's programs at the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB). (EGPandanan)

## School Gardens/ from page 1

such projects, availability of land for school gardens, and high prevalence of impoverished and nutritionally deficient pupils and households.

Science-based knowledge and simple production technologies will play major roles in the project; one of which is the introduction of edible landscaping system to schools.

In line with this project, SEARCA conducted a workshop on 26 January 2016 to facilitate discussion among the stakeholders of the project on its target activities and implementation strategies.

The participants were principals and teachers of the pilot schools as well as representatives from UPLB, SEARCA, DepEd Laguna Division, and the Office of the Provincial Agriculturist and Provincial

Planning and Development Coordination Office of Laguna.

They validated the project's logical framework and outlined the target activities in line with the project's focus areas and the sustainability plan. With the help of the other SEAMEO Centers,

SEARCA also aims to scale up the project to other parts of the region, starting with Indonesia.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) provided funding support for the initial phase of the project through the SEAMEO College. (MKRPunto)



Participants identify target activities on three components of the project—education, nutrition, and economics/production.

### THE SEARCA DIARY

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Participants and organizers of the workshop on school and home gardens held at SEARCA on 26 January 2016.

# Australian, French envoys strengthen ties with SEARCA

Two ambassadors visited SEARCA in January 2016 to strengthen ties and explore avenues for new collaborations in agriculture in their host country.

Her Excellency Amanda Gorely, newly installed Australian Ambassador to the Philippines, and His Excellency Thierry Mathou, Ambassador of France to the Philippines and Micronesia, were at SEARCA on 21 and 25 January 2016, respectively, to know more about the Center's current programs and priorities.

SEARCA has a long history of cooperation with both Australia and France on research and capacity building projects, particularly in the Philippines.

## Australia-SEARCA cooperation

From 1993 to 2009, a series of land conservation projects with the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) benefitted farmers in upland and sloping agricultural lands in the Visayas and Mindanao. From 2006 to 2013, SEARCA also implemented ACIAR-funded studies on the economic and policy environment for the country's agriculture sector and on transport of fruits and vegetables from Mindanao.

In 2015, SEARCA completed an Australia-commissioned study on inclusive agribusiness in Southeast Asia focusing on the Philippines, Indonesia, Myanmar, and Vietnam. Funded by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs (DFAT) through the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), the scoping study results were presented at a high-level roundtable discussion in Vietnam. Priority action points identified by the roundtable were along the following areas: small and medium enterprise engagement, public-private partnership models, inclusiveness metrics, value chain financing, and trade implications, among others.

Ambassador Gorely commended SEARCA for its development programs in the region and expressed her support to efforts of the Center to renew its partnerships with Australian research and education institutions.

Ms. Mellissa Wood, ACIAR General Manager for Global Programs, came to SEARCA the day after the Ambassador's visit to discuss details of ACIAR's research agenda and the possibility of working with SEARCA along shared priorities.

## Collaborations with France

On the other hand, Ambassador Mathou said his top priority is to beef up cooperation in agriculture between the Philippines and France and is looking

to collaborate with SEARCA on ensuing initiatives under such cooperation. He told Dr. Saguiguit that a bilateral agreement between France and the Philippines will embody the different aspects of the cooperation focused on the latter's agriculture sector, including education and research.

The French diplomat noted the many collaborations between SEARCA and the French government and institutions and discussed possible areas for renewed cooperation. SEARCA had earlier implemented together with the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD) a European Union-funded project on focused food production assistance

to vulnerable sectors that benefited more than 22,000 Filipino farmers and fisherfolks.

## Interest in AgriMuseum

Both envoys noted with keen interest SEARCA's plan to establish a Southeast Asian AgriMuseum and Learning Center on Agricultural and Rural Development to promote the importance of agriculture, its centrality to people's lives, and its attendant challenges, particularly among the youth.

SEARCA is currently inviting partners to join its initiative to build the museum. (LLDDomingo)



Australian Ambassador Amanda Gorely (right) with Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, while touring SEARCA's facilities.



Dr. Saguiguit (second from left) relates to Ms. Mellissa Wood (second from right), ACIAR General Manager for Global Programs, SEARCA's research collaboration with ACIAR spanning two decades. Looking on are Dr. Bessie M. Burgos (leftmost), SEARCA Program Head for Research and Development, and Ms. Cecilia O. Honrado, Country Manager of ACIAR in the Philippines.



Dr. Saguiguit briefs French Ambassador Thierry Mathou (second from left) about SEARCA during the envoy's visit to the Center with Ms. Anais Voron (leftmost), Scientific and Development Attaché at the French Embassy in the Philippines. With Dr. Saguiguit at the meeting are SEARCA's program heads (not in photo) and Ms. Avril DG. Madrid (rightmost), Program Specialist, Knowledge Resources.



## OECD to tap SEARCA anew for ASEAN agri innovations study

PARIS, France—The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is set to tap SEARCA again for the second phase of the *Review and Assessment of the Agricultural Innovation Systems (AIS) in ASEAN*. This was disclosed in a meeting between OECD officials and Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, at the OECD headquarters in Paris on 1 March 2016. SEARCA conducted the OECD-funded study to provide an overview of AIS in ASEAN Member States (AMS) with focus on solving long-term food security concerns among the AMS. The study covered governance and cross-country supply of agricultural innovations, public and private investments in AIS, and knowledge flows via education and extension. Its outputs will be used in the second phase of the study, which is an in-depth review of AIS policies in the individual ASEAN countries.

The AIS study is part of a bigger initiative of OECD with ASEAN titled “Building Food Security and Managing Risk: A Focus on Southeast Asia,” which ties in with SEARCA’s priority focus on food security within the overarching theme of inclusive and sustainable agricultural and rural development (ISARD) of its current five-year plan. SEARCA is the first center of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) to cooperate with the OECD, an organization dedicated to economic development which counts the SEAMEO associate member countries (Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Netherlands, New Zealand, Spain, and United Kingdom) among its 34 members. (LLDDomingo)

## Partnership to boost SEA universities’ research capacities

PARIS, France—SEARCA and the Agricultural, Veterinary and Forestry Institute of France (IAVFF-Agreenium) have agreed to cooperate in strengthening the research capacities of strategic agricultural universities in Southeast Asia.

IAVFF-Agreenium is a conglomerate that pools together the competencies of all the French public agricultural and veterinary research and higher education institutions, including the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD).

Through CIRAD, IAVFF-Agreenium is looking to bring its massive expertise on all facets of

agriculture, forestry and veterinary science into SEARCA’s Institutional Development Assistance (IDA) Program.

In a meeting between Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director; Dr. Claude Bernhard, IAVFF-Agreenium Director; Dr. Christian Hoste, IAVFF-Agreenium Director of International Relations; Dr. Alain Rival, CIRAD Regional Director for Southeast Asian Island Countries; and Dr. Philippe Girard, CIRAD Regional Director for Continental Southeast Asia, in Paris on 3 March 2016, it was agreed that IAVFF-Agreenium will inject a strong research component into the program while SEARCA continues to focus on higher education

and the capacity development component. This will apply to the initial beneficiaries of SEARCA’s IDA program: Royal University of Agriculture (RUA) in Cambodia, Savannakhet University (SKU) in Lao PDR, Yezin Agricultural University (YAU) in Myanmar, and Universidade Nacional Timor Lorosa’e (UNTL).

In view of this development, the top officials of SEARCA, IAVFF-Agreenium, and the three universities will gather in a workshop to revisit the IDA program’s goals, rework its strategies, and delineate new roles and responsibilities. (LLDDomingo)



Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr. (center), SEARCA Director, is flanked by Dr. Claude Bernhard, IAVFF-Agreenium Director, on his left and Dr. Alain Rival of CIRAD at the Paris International Agricultural Fair on 3 March 2016.

## 44 academic execs attend LEAP Cambodia

KAMPOT, Cambodia—Academic executives from 10 higher education institutions in the country convened at the Kampot Diamond Hotel to participate in the Leadership Excellence in Academe Program (LEAP) conducted by SEARCA.

The 40 participating academic administrators are from the Royal University of Agriculture (RUA), University of Battambang (UBB), University of Heng Samrin Thbongkhmum (UHST), Meanchey University (MCU), Svay Rieng University (SRU), University of Kratie (UKT), Chea Sym University of Kamchaymear (CSUK), Prek Leap National College of Agriculture (PNCA), Kampong Cham National School of Agriculture (KNSA), and Bright Hope Institute (BHI). There were also

four participants from the Directorate of Higher Education of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MOEYS).

Jointly organized by SEARCA, MOEYS Directorate of Higher Education, and RUA, the learning event, also called “LEAP Cambodia,” ran from 29 February to 4 March 2016.

Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, said the program focuses on needs specific to the country to develop and nurture academic leaders, who are apprised of current challenges and opportunities in the context of the country, the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS), and Southeast Asia as a whole, and the corresponding leadership and management strategies applicable to their respective institutions.

“We hope that your discussions and reflections throughout these five days will lead you to outdo your own past performance and offer agricultural education with its allied sciences to turn out promising leaders and practitioners in agricultural and rural development in Cambodia,” H.E. Dr. Touch Visalsok, Under Secretary of State, Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport (MOEYS), said as he opened the leadership forum.

Concerned that agricultural growth in Cambodia might stagnate when yield does not improve even if agricultural inputs are increased because maximum yield has been reached and soil fertility has decreased, Visalsok stressed the country’s

44 academic execs/ to page 5

## SEARCA to support joint scholarships on InterRisk

BANGKOK, Thailand—SEARCA will support joint scholarships to help build a cadre of professionals to handle the health risks brought about by human, animal, and ecosystem interactions, or what is dubbed as “InterRisk.”

This was announced by Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, at the launch of the French-initiated “International Double Degree Master’s Programme InterRisk” on 12 January 2016 at Kasetsart University (KU).

The pioneering master’s program is a collaborative project of the French government through the French Agricultural Research

Center for International Development (CIRAD), KU, and the Veterinary School of Toulouse in France. It provides extensive academic training on evaluation and management of health risks considering the “One Health” approach. It is centered on the assessment and management of health risks at the human, animal, and ecosystem interface.

Dr. Saguiguit said the joint scholarships will enable Southeast Asians to pursue the master’s program at KU and Veterinary School of Toulouse and get a double diploma in health risks management from both French and Thai universities.

He added that SEARCA’s goal is “for these joint scholarship programs to not only enhance and broaden the specific areas of study in the field of agricultural and rural development, but also to promote internationalization of higher education in view of the ASEAN Economic Integration.

Moreover, he said SEARCA is also looking to develop a training course that will create increased awareness and enable people to fully understand the health risks at the human, animal, and ecosystem interface. (Report from EGPandanang)



Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr. (leftmost), SEARCA Director, with H.E. Gilles Garachon (third from left), Ambassador of France to Thailand; Mr. Patrick Deboyser (rightmost), Minister Counsellor for Health and Food Safety of the Delegation of the European Union to Thailand; Dr. Isabelle Chmitelin (second from left), Dean of the Veterinary School of Toulouse; and Dr. Bancha Kwanyuen (second from right), Acting President of KU.

### 44 academic execs/ from page 4

need for highly qualified human resources in agriculture.

He said LEAP Cambodia is a significant event because in order for Cambodian universities to produce good human resources, they must first develop good leaders of higher education institutions in agriculture.

Dr. Nith Bunlay, MOEYS Deputy-Director General for Higher Education, also urged the participating academic executives to actively engage in

the leadership forum and take the initiative to work with MOEYS to increase the enrolment in agriculture courses in their universities. Noting the contribution of the agriculture sector to Cambodia’s gross domestic product, he reiterated the need to empower and retool human resources in agriculture in the country.

LEAP Cambodia is the first in-country offering of LEAP Southeast Asia (SEA), one of SEARCA’s staple course offerings for executives and leaders.

LEAP SEA traces its roots to the Advanced Higher Education Administrator Development (AHEAD) course that SEARCA offered from 1993 to 2003.

Dr. Maria Celeste H. Cadiz, Program Head; Ms. Nova A. Ramos, Program Specialist; and Ms. Maria Cristina L. Decena, Office Assistant, all of the Knowledge Management Department, coordinated the forum in collaboration with counterparts from MOEYS and RUA. (Reports from MCHCadiz/NARamos)



## Umbrella program on climate change in Southeast Asia crafted

SEARCA teamed up with the CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security in Southeast Asia (CCAFS SEA), International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), and the Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC) to craft the *Umbrella Program on Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation (CChAM) for Southeast Asia*.

In line with inclusive and sustainable agricultural and rural development (ISARD), the overarching theme of SEARCA's Tenth Five-Year Plan, the Umbrella Program on CChAM is intended to serve as a platform for collaborative research and development (R&D) as well as knowledge management and capacity development (KMCD) on climate change adaptation and resiliency in Southeast Asia.

Reflective of areas where there is willingness to collaborate at the regional and sub-regional levels among the participating institutions, the Umbrella Program on CChAM is seen as strategic and is anchored on the ASEAN Multi-Sectoral Framework on Climate Change (AFCC). It can also support the implementation of the ASEAN Vision for Food, Agriculture and Forestry (2016-2025) wherein climate change is a crucial concern.

The priority research areas under the umbrella program are categorized into four themes:

- Assessing climate change impacts and risks for policy, plans, and investments



Workshop participants present their ideas on the research themes and help refine the priority areas for research on CChAM in the region.

- Advancing low-carbon agriculture and rural development
- Enhancing proactive adaptation to climate change, variability, and extremes
- Enabling policies (including processes) and governance for climate-resilient agriculture and rural communities (cross-cutting theme)

In developing these themes, the collaborating institutions conducted a scoping study of the different frameworks, initiatives, and publications on climate change in Southeast Asia. The resulting framework was then presented for

validation during their Regional Consultation Workshop attended by representatives from the government, academe and research institutions, and nongovernmental and international organizations.

SEARCA and its partners CCAFS SEA and CIAT in the Umbrella Program for CChAM recognize that no individual institution or organization could solve problems related to climate change on its own. They agree that better and more timely solutions can be provided to communities by pooling resources together. (LLDDomingo)

## 2 Japanese universities explore collaboration with SEARCA

Officials and staff from Nagoya University (NU) and Kyoto University (KU), two of the leading universities in Japan, visited SEARCA on 9 March 2016 to strengthen ties and explore possible areas for further cooperation. Both delegations were received by Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, and the Center's program heads, who also provided an overview of the Center's programs and activities.

Leading the delegation from NU was Dr. Yoshihito Watanabe, Vice President for International Affairs and Public Relations, who thanked SEARCA for its continued support to their university, particularly in establishing the NU Asian Satellite Campus-Philippines at the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB). He was accompanied by the Director and technical and administrative support staff of the NU Asian Satellite Campuses Institute, as well as deans and professors of NU Graduate Schools.

The NU officials were apprised on the ongoing SEARCA-NU Joint PhD Research Scholarship. With a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for institutional cooperation between NU and SEARCA still in force, NU is also interested in a joint research project, particularly in the following areas: social sciences, value chain analysis of high-value commodities, food security, and climate change.

Meanwhile, KU Graduate School of Economics officials explored the possibility of joining the SEARCA-initiated Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC) as an associate member university. (EGPandanan)



Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr. (second from right), SEARCA Director, with visiting NU officials, including (from left) Dr. Akira Yamauchi, NU Director of International Cooperation for Agricultural Education (ICCAE); Dr. Yoshito Watanabe, NU Vice President for International Affairs and Public Relations and Trustee; Dr. Satoshi Ohkura, NU Professor of Biological Sciences; and Dr. Fumio Isoda, NU Director of Asian Satellite Campuses Institute.

## LGU, state college and SEARCA partner to boost calamansi industry

SEARCA has partnered with the local government of Victoria, Oriental Mindoro and Mindoro State College of Agriculture and Technology (MinSCAT) to revitalize the town's calamansi industry.

The memorandum of agreement was signed on 2 February 2016 by Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director; Victoria Mayor Alfredo G. Ortega, Jr.; and Dr. Jesse T. Zamora, MinSCAT President.

Under the agreement, the partners will implement a project called *Revitalizing Calamansi Industry in Victoria, Oriental Mindoro through Strengthening Linkages among Farmers, LGU, NGAs, SUCs, CSOs and the Private Sector*, which they had jointly developed.

The project aims to rehabilitate Victoria's calamansi industry to make it economically viable and at the same time environmentally sustainable and socially inclusive.

"Mindoro is a major producer of calamansi in the country, yet it has been experiencing huge declines in production due to lack of appropriate marketing arrangements and value-adding activities for calamansi," Dr. Saguiguit said.

The project aims to raise yields, increase production of calamansi-based products, diversify products and markets, and boost income as a result of better prices of products sold and reduced postharvest losses during peak season.

The collaborative project is under SEARCA's *Pilot and Upscaling Effective Models of Inclusive and Sustainable Agricultural and Rural Development (ISARD) Program*.

Through the program, SEARCA brings to local communities effective agricultural systems as models of ISARD that demonstrate increased benefit for poor and vulnerable groups through integrated ground-level development interventions.

"We involve the local communities, LGUs, and universities in the program to ensure that the stakeholders are empowered to sustain the gains of the program beyond the project life," Dr. Saguiguit said.



Officials from partner institutions who were present at the signing rites included (from left) Dr. Bessie M. Burgos, SEARCA Program Head for Research and Development; Victoria Mayor Alfredo G. Ortega, Jr.; Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director; Dr. Ma. Concepcion L. Mores, MinSCAT Vice President for Research, Extension and Development; and Victoria Vice Mayor Luis S. Castillet, Sr.

Also present during the signing ceremonies are other members of the newly formed Project Steering Committee which is composed of representatives from the MIMAROPA regional offices of the Department of Agriculture-Agricultural Training Institute (DA-ATI), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Department of Science and Technology (DOST), National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), Victoria's local government, MinSCAT, and SEARCA. (Reports from HMCustodio/AMReglos)

## National agri, fisheries RDE agenda reviewed

MANILA, Philippines—The Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Agricultural Research (DA-BAR) partnered with SEARCA and WorldFish to convene workshops that reviewed, updated, and refined the national Research and Development, and Extension Agenda and Programs (RDEAP) 2016-2022 for agriculture and fisheries.

The first meeting was a *National Multistakeholder Consultation Workshop* held on 15-19 February 2016. It had 265 participants, 180 of whom are from DA agencies, research centers and field units; the rest were subject matter experts and representatives from the private sector, academe, and the organizers. They agreed on the need to ensure business perspective is internalized, establish clear impact pathways, and develop strategies so they can "do more together," incorporate risk assessment, and emphasize inclusive value chain understanding and assessment.

Participants of the second workshop, held on 17-18 March 2016, included the DA-BAR pool of experts, representatives from DA operating units, and selected DA-BAR technical staff.

They refined the drafts produced by the first workshop to ensure relevance, responsiveness, and sustainability. The final document will be presented to the DA in May 2016. (MRAJErmino)



Philippine Senator Cynthia A. Villar (third from right), Chair of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Food, served as resource speaker at the national multistakeholders consultation workshop held in February 2016 along with Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit Jr. (second from right), SEARCA Director; DA Undersecretary Segfredo R. Serrano (right), and Inang Lupa Movement President William Dar (left). Also in the photo are DA-BAR Director Nicomedes P. Eleazar (third from left) and DA-BAR Assistant Director Teodoro Solsoloy.



# Snapshots



**SEA POLICY RESEARCH NETWORK:** SEARCA organized and hosted on 8-10 March 2016 a workshop for establishing the SEAMEO Centers Policy Research Network (CPRN). It was attended by 29 officials and key staff of 15 centers/network and the secretariat of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO). They determined the CPRN's structure and functions, research priorities, and programs.



**A HAPPY REUNION:** Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr. (right) with Dr. Suraphol Sanguansri, former SEARCA Deputy Director, on 11 January 2016 in Bangkok, Thailand. Dr. Suraphol served as the Center's Deputy Director from 1976 to 1981.



**ANNUAL STUDY TOUR:** As part of the exposure trip on tropical agriculture and Philippine bio-business that Tokyo University of Agriculture (Tokyo NODA) and the University of the Philippines Los Baños organize yearly, 25 Tokyo NODA undergraduate students visited SEARCA on 18 February 2016. They were briefed on SEARCA's Biotechnology Information Center and research activities related to bio-business.



**OUTREACH OPPORTUNITY:** Mr. Brandon Soloski (rightmost), Senior Program Coordinator, and Ms. Franceline Jimenez (second from right), Philippine Project Coordinator, both of PYXERA Global, and their colleagues visited SEARCA on 16 March 2016. They met with Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, and the SEARCA Program Heads to explore areas for collaboration, particularly in using information communication technology for agriculture and environment. PYXERA Global is an international nongovernment organization that specializes in pro bono programs and one of IBM's global implementing partners for its Corporate Service Corps (CSC) Program. PYXERA assists in connecting IBM with communities worldwide to help solve some of their most challenging problems while providing leadership development to its highly skilled corporate professionals.



**EXPLORATORY MEETING:** Dr. Nicomedes P. Eleazar (second from right), Executive Director of the Philippine Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Agricultural Research, visited SEARCA on 22 February 2016. In a briefing led by Dr. Maria Celeste H. Cadiz (right), Program Head for Knowledge Management, SEARCA explored the possibility of collaborating with DA-BAR on the establishment of a Southeast Asian AgriMuseum and Learning Center on Agricultural and Rural Development and publication of a book on agricultural and rural development. Other SEARCA staff in the photo are (from left) Ms. Avril DG. Madrid, Program Specialist, Knowledge Resources Unit, and Dr. Bessie M. Burgos, Program Head for Research and Development.



**NAGASAKI UNIVERSITY VISIT:** Ten students and two faculty members of the university visited SEARCA on 6 March 2016 as part of the Global Social Responsibility (GSR) Short-term Study Tour. One of the faculty members was Dr. Celia L. Umali (fifth from right), Professor of International Business, a former SEARCA staff and daughter of national scientist and SEARCA founding director Dr. Dioscoro L. Umali. With them in the photo are SEARCA officers and staff and a University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) professor.



## SEARCA Director makes pitch for biodiversity in ASEAN meet

BANGKOK, Thailand—Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, underscored the need to mainstream the importance of biodiversity conservation to build up and sustain public financing for it.

“Unless you get the message across that biodiversity is important and affects people’s lives, livelihood, and wellbeing, it will be an uphill battle to win the hearts and minds of the very people who should be your allies in protecting and conserving the region’s biodiversity and natural resources,” Dr. Saguiguit stressed in his message at the partners’ forum on sustainable financing for biodiversity of the *ASEAN Conference on Biodiversity 2016* hosted by the Royal Thai Government.

Speaking on the invitation of the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB), Dr. Saguiguit was able to impart some advice and suggestions on alternative sources of much needed program funds for regional centers like SEARCA and ACB, apart from host government contributions.

Convened on 15-19 February 2016, the conference had about 500 participants from governments of ASEAN Member States (AMS), international organizations, scientific and research institutions,



Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, shares some advice on alternative sources of program funds for regional centers at the partners’ forum on sustainable financing for biodiversity of the ASEAN Conference on Biodiversity 2016 held on 15-19 February 2016 in Bangkok, Thailand. (Photo courtesy of Francis Dejon/ACB)

academe, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). The partners’ forum, in particular, was attended by the Swiss Ambassador to Thailand, ASEAN senior officials, as well as representatives of donor agencies, NGOs, development organizations, and the private sector.

The conference provided a venue for exchange of perspectives on ecosystem-based approaches to manage critical ecosystems and biodiversity, access and benefit sharing, and sustaining biodiversity as a business opportunity. It also discussed ways for AMS to advance the ASEAN biodiversity agenda in the context of the Aichi Targets and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by world leaders in 2015.

## Focus program agenda on current dev’t issues, Saguiguit tells CAPSA

BANGKOK, Thailand—“Defining a viable program agenda on contemporary development issues that will attract and benefit all members.” This was the advice of Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, to the Centre for Alleviation of Poverty through Sustainable Agriculture (CAPSA) at the 12th Session of its Governing Council held here.

CAPSA is a regional institution under the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP). CAPSA’s goal to reduce poverty and enhance food security through sustainable agriculture is perfectly aligned with SEARCA’s goal of promoting food security and poverty alleviation through inclusive and sustainable agricultural and rural development (ISARD).

While the current members of CAPSA’s Governing Council are Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Thailand, SEARCA has been consistently invited to the council’s annual meeting. Dr. Saguiguit attended the meeting held on 19 February 2016, which reviewed CAPSA’s accomplishments in the past year and plans for 2016. The meeting also discussed efforts to revitalize CAPSA in view of the reduced financial contributions of UNESCAP.

The strategy, Dr. Saguiguit pointed out, may be similar to what is being employed in the case of the Association of Asian Agricultural Colleges and Universities (AAACU), for which SEARCA serves as fund manager.

## Honorary doctorate conferred on SEARCA Senior Fellow



Dr. Paul S. Teng, Professor at the Nanyang Technological University (NTU) in Singapore and SEARCA Senior Fellow, was conferred an honorary Doctor of Science degree

by Australia’s Murdoch University on 13 March 2016. At NTU, Prof. Teng holds appointments as Principal Officer at the National Institute of Education and Adjunct Senior Fellow (Food Security) at the Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies of S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS).

Prof. Teng received the honorary doctorate for his outstanding achievements and contributions in the area of food security, and for having served as a Commissioner on the Second Murdoch Commission, Australia.

His innovative efforts in research and teaching spanning 30 years has made Prof. Teng an internationally recognized expert and thought leader on food security, biosafety of crop biotechnology, and bio-entrepreneurship in the context of sustainable development. He has worked in academe, non-profit and international organizations, and the private sector, and had recently focused on regional food security initiatives (e.g., inclusive agribusiness and sustainable agricultural production in ASEAN and Asia). His current interests are technology-policy interface of sustainable agriculture and food production and food security.

Currently, Prof. Teng also serves as the Honorary Chairman of the Philippines-based International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA) and Non-Executive Chair of Asia Biobusiness Pte Ltd. Singapore. (LLDDomingo)

Aside from revisiting its program agenda, Dr. Saguiguit said the strategy includes updating current membership fees.

The current Council Chair, Agriculture Minister Inia Seruiratu of Fiji, whom the SEARCA Director previously met while on official mission, was most receptive of the Director’s views. (LLDDomingo)

## SEARCA drawn in as ASFCC gears up for Phase III

JAKARTA, Indonesia—SEARCA presented its accomplishments and planned activities for 2016 along with other implementing partners of the ASEAN-Swiss Partnership on Social Forestry and Climate Change (ASFCC) Program Phase II.

ASFCC is a partnership program with the 10 ASEAN Member States to strengthen sustainable forest management and social forestry as they relate to climate change adaptation and mitigation. SEARCA joined the ASFCC in 2014 as the implementer of the ASEAN Social Forestry Network Strategic Response Fund (ASRF), a

flexible funding mechanism recommended by the ASFCC Phase I External Review.

In a planning meeting for 2016 and ASFCC Program Phase III (2017-2020) held on 18-20 January 2016, the ASFCC team also identified opportunities for synergy as it gears up to enhance research and knowledge generation as well as knowledge sharing and communication activities. With its expertise and wealth of knowledge on social forestry and climate change, the ASFCC team is determined to contribute to the ASEAN Cooperation in Food, Agriculture, and Forestry 2016-2025.

The implementing partners represented were SEARCA, Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), Non-Timber Forest Products-Exchange Programme (NTFP-EP),

Regional Community Forestry Training Center (RECOFTC), and World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF). Also present were Dr. Jurgen Blaser, Swiss Development Cooperation Global Program Climate Change Advisor and ASFCC Program Advisor; Dr. Doris Capistrano, ASFCC Senior Advisor; and Mr. Sreeram Koottala, ASFCC Fiduciary Advisor.

Mr. Wiratno, Chairperson, ASFN Secretariat and Director of Social Forestry Land Preparation, Directorate General of Social Forestry and Environment Partnership, Indonesia, and Mr. Dian Sukmajaya, Senior Officer, Agriculture Industries and Natural Resources Division, ASEAN Secretariat, provided guidance in planning for sustainability mechanisms and ASFCC Program Phase III. (MAABatas)

## ASFN partners support Asia Pacific Forestry Week

CLARK FREEPORT ZONE, Philippines—The ASEAN Social Forestry Network (ASFN) partners rallied behind Asia Pacific Forestry Week (APFW) 2016, which had the theme “Growing our Future.”

SEARCA is among the ASFN implementing partners under the ASEAN-Swiss Partnership on Social Forestry and Climate Change (ASFCC). The other partners are World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF), Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), Non-Timber Forest Products-Exchange Programme (NTFP-EP), and Regional Community Forestry Training Center for Asia and the Pacific (RECOFTC).

Held on 22-26 February 2016, APFW gathered more than 1,000 government officials, international and representatives from nongovernmental organization and the forest industry from over 30 countries. Organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) every four years, this year's edition was hosted by the Philippine government through the Department of Environment and Natural Resources- Forest Management Bureau.

The ASFN led eight sessions under Stream 3, titled *Serving Society: Forestry and People*, one of five parallel thematic streams held during the APFW. The other streams focused on pathways to prosperity: future trade and markets; tackling climate change: challenges and opportunities; new institutions, new governance; and our green future: green investments and growing our natural assets.

At the end of each stream, the lead organizations came up with actionable recommendations



Ms. Amy M. Lecciones (second from right), ASRF Regional Program Coordinator, and Ms. Mary Ann A. Batas (second from left), ASRF Project Coordinator, with representatives of ASFN partners pose by the ASFN exhibit at APFW 2016. (Photo courtesy of ASFN Secretariat)

that are responsive to the needs of the region's forestry sector. ASFN put forth the following recommendations: strengthen local tenure and rights, invest in local institutions and capacities, recognize swidden (rotational) cultivation as legitimate land use practice, and mainstream agroforestry in national forest restoration.

The SEARCA delegation to APFW 2016 comprised Dr. Bessie M. Burgos, Program Head, and Ms. Carmen Nyhria G. Rogel, Program Specialist, both of the Research and Development Department (RDD); Ms. Amy M. Lecciones, Regional Program Coordinator, and Ms. Mary Ann A. Batas, Project Coordinator, both of the ASFN Strategic Response Fund (ASRF) implemented by the Center. They also participated in the ASFCC meeting held on 25 February 2016, which discussed the external review of ASFCC-Phase 2, plans for the third phase, the ASFN 10th Annual

Meeting, and the APFW Stream 3 summary and recommendations.

Ms. Lecciones and Ms. Batas also met with the ASFN focal persons from Cambodia, Myanmar, Vietnam, and the Philippines for updates on the ASRF projects and project development assistance workshops. On the other hand, Dr. Burgos and Ms. Rogel also met with ICRAF representatives to discuss collaboration on an integrated research-in-development program on greening the ASEAN economic corridors.

A SEARCA travel grant supported the participation of Dr. Eri Indrawan of Indonesia's Ministry of Environment and Forestry, enabling him to present his paper titled “The NTFP Sentra Initiative” at the APFW Stream 1 session on *Innovative Non Timber Forest Product (NTFP) Marketing Channels and Mechanisms*. (Report from MAABatas)



## Phil agri officials tour Thai model farms, agri learning centers

BANGKOK, Thailand—Ten officials and key staff of the Philippine Department of Agriculture (DA) comprised the second batch to go on overseas study mission under the DA Adaptation and Mitigation Initiatives in Agriculture (AMIA). The first batch went to Vietnam. Both were organized by SEARCA in collaboration with the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) Regional Office for Asia based in Hanoi.

### Why study missions?

The study missions aimed to enhance the managerial and technical capacity of the DA AMIA teams and focal persons. This is part of the capacity building component of the project titled *Strengthening Implementation of AMIA* that SEARCA is implementing for DA.

One staff each from the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) and Rice Watch and Action Network (RWAN) also joined the study mission on 14-18 March 2016. They learned how Thailand mainstreams climate change adaptation into its policies, plans, and programs in agriculture. Thailand's Department of Agriculture (DOA) served a partner for this study mission.

### New theory in agriculture

Thailand has more than 50 Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) projects funded by His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej, Dr. Margaret Yoovatana, DOA Senior Policy and Plan Specialist, told the mission. The projects focus on conservation and rehabilitation of water reservoirs and resources; soil amelioration practices; income generating livelihood programs; sufficiency economy; socio-agro-forestry; reforestation; and diversification (New Theory Farming in Agriculture). Dr. Yoovatana said King Bhumibol involved himself personally in projects geared toward agricultural and rural development.

The mission visited a learning center for the King's New Theory in Agriculture in Bangkok. The theory is anchored on the division of each rural household's agricultural land, which averages 10-15 rai (1.6-2.4 ha), into four zones following a ratio of 30:30:30:10. The prescribed allocation is as follows: 30% for pond to store 19,000 cubic meters of water for cultivation in dry season; 30% for rice cultivation sufficient for year-round household consumption; 30% for other crops and fruit; and 10% for housing, raising livestock, and other activities.

### Other model Thai farms

In the Nong Chok District of Bangkok, the mission met Mr. Somchai Samartrakun, Chairman of the Koiroottakwa Golden Land Community, which is predominantly Muslim. Recognized as a Sufficiency Learning Center,



A farmer feeds the goats raised at Queen Sirikit's model farm in Ang Thong province.

Mr. Somchai's farm offers free training in renewable energy and biodiesel production, livestock and integrated farming, composting, and small-scale food processing. As such, the model farm is a practical application of King Bhumibol's philosophy of "Sufficiency Economy," which advocates that "producers or consumers try to produce or consume within the limit ... of existing income or resources first."



A model farm in Khao Hin Sorn Royal Development Study Center that demonstrates King Bhumibol's New Theory in Agriculture.

The mission also visited Queen Sirikit's Model Farm in Ang Thong province. The farm serves as a training center for the unemployed, farmers, and flood victims. They are trained on new agricultural farming methods in vegetable gardening, paddy rice production, mushroom production, and goat raising. They also learn the importance of producing and storing sufficient food as well as producing high-quality products for the market.

The Khao Hin Son Royal Development Study Center in Chachoengsao province that the mission toured is one of six such centers established by King Bhumibol. Managed by the Land Development Department under the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, the training center is a model of sustainable agricultural development and has a demonstration farm that showcases the King's pioneering work on agricultural research and development.

### Flood management and land use changes

At the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) the mission to learn about Thailand's flood protection and management program, advanced radar system, and flood forecasting tools. BMA project planning expert Vichai Somboon said the government began implementing flood protection improvements in the aftermath of the 2011 flood, the worst in Thailand's history. These measures include dredging main canals, and flood wall repairs and elevation, particularly along rivers and dikes.

In a meeting with Dr. Didier Lesueur of the French Agriculture Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD), the mission learned about land use changes in different parts of Thailand throughout the year and the use of biochar, a pure form of charcoal, to improve soil fertility and mitigate climate change. (Report from RBBantayan)



# Alumni Notes

## SEARCHA ALUMNI CRAFT REGIONAL COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

BANGKOK, Thailand—Alumni from nine country chapters of the Regional SEARCA Fellows Association (RSFA) converged at Kasetsart University (KU) to push for more collaborative projects. The countries represented were Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam.

Hosted by the KU Faculty of Forestry on 1-2 February 2016, the meeting was a collaborative activity of RSFA and the Thai SEARCA Fellows Association (TSFA) and was thus jointly presided by Dr. Cecilia N. Gascon and Dr. Monton Jamroenpruksa, presidents of RSFA and TSFA, respectively.

The alumni identified three collaborative projects on climate change and food security as they relate to smallholders in their respective countries. They also plotted the regional conferences and knowledge sharing events that each country chapter of RSFA will organize in the coming years.

“I have known SEARCA even when I was a graduate student and I know that SEARCA can serve as a model for ASEAN Economic Community collaborative work,” Prof. Dr. Chongrak Wachinrat, Dean, Faculty of Forestry and incoming KU Acting President, said at the opening of the meeting.

Organized in 1983 through a series of in-country planning workshops, RSFA has about 1,200 members all over Southeast Asia today. RSFA members present at the meeting also drafted revisions to the RSFA constitution and by-laws to make them more relevant. Proposed changes include renaming it Regional SEARCA Alumni Association and that it will include only nationals of member countries of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) who completed their graduate studies through the SEARCA Scholarship Program. As the proposed revisions are now routed to all RSFA members, the amended constitution is slated for ratification in November 2016. (Report from JSLaranas)

## MINGUEZ TRAINS ON COFFEE PROPAGATION IN FRANCE

Ms. Lucille Minguez (MS, plant pathology, UPLB, 2011), Science Research Specialist II at the Department of Agriculture (DA), Philippines, is one of two DA research specialists who will train in mass propagation of Robusta coffee varieties at the Nestlé Research and Development Center in Tours, France.



Dr. Chongrak Wachinrat (front and center), KU Dean of the Faculty of Forestry and incoming Acting President, with the RSFA officers and meeting organizers.



Dr. Anake Topark-Ngarm (center), former SEARCA Deputy Director for Programs whose term ended 23 years ago, joined the alumni at the end of their meeting. Now based in Khon Kaen, Thailand, he was delighted to meet people from SEARCA and to know that the SEARCA scholars he had recruited are now accomplished professionals holding leadership posts in their respective institutions. With Dr. Anake in the photo are Dr. Cecilia N. Gascon (left), President of Bulacan State University and RSFA, and Dr. Maria Cristeta N. Cuaresma, SEARCA Program Head for Graduate Education and Institutional Development.

The three-month training program starting March 2016 is jointly sponsored by DA and Nestlé under an agreement on the Enhanced National Convergence Initiative (NCI) they signed in 2009. The NCI intends to develop the country's agriculture sector through appropriate support services that will improve farm productivity, profitability and competitiveness, and sustainability.

Ms. Minguez's training is in line with a nationwide coffee development program planned under the NCI to help increase the income of coffee farmers and reestablish the country as a major coffee producer. (LLDDomingo)



From left: Ms. Lucille Minguez with Ms. Fe Abragan, fellow trainee and colleague at DA; Mr. Jacques Reber, Nestlé Philippines Chairman and CEO; and Assistant Director Jenny Remonquillo of the DA-Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) High Value Crops Development Program. (Photo courtesy of The Philippine Star)



## 3rd annual IDRC-SEARCA confab convened

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia—The Royal University of Agriculture (RUA) hosted the *Third IDRC-SEARCA Annual Fellowship plus Conference-Workshop* attended by about 550 participants from 15 countries, including 31 scholars under the Southeast Asian Upland Agriculture Fellowship project of SEARCA and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada.

The annual roving conference under the IDRC-SEARCA fellowship project was held on 16-18 January 2016 in conjunction with the *Seventh International Conference on Environmental and Rural Development (7th ICERD 2016)* also hosted by RUA.

The events were co-organized by SEARCA, IDRC, RUA, International Society of Environmental and Rural Development (ISERD), Institute of Environmental Rehabilitation and Conservation (ERCON), and the United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS).

With the theme *Environmentally Friendly Agricultural and Rural Development*, the conference discussed suitable and effective strategies for sustainable rural development, taking into account the agricultural and environmental attributes in developing countries.

A total of 84 papers were presented under four thematic areas: Education for Sustainable Rural Development, Rural Development, Environmental Management, and Agricultural Systems. The conference also featured poster papers and a field tour to Kampong Speu Province in southwest Cambodia.

### Alumni garner awards

Among the 11 IDRC-SEARCA scholars who presented papers on their thesis research, two bagged the Excellent Paper Award.

The winning papers are titled "Impact Assessment of Land Use Change on Ecosystem Services and Livelihood Security of Rural Highland Communities in Lao PDR" by Mr. Bouavonh Biachampah, a Laotian who completed his MS in Agricultural Systems at Chiang Mai University (CMU), Thailand; and "The Cassava Marketing in Pailin Province, Cambodia" by Ms. Chheun Sreyneang, a Cambodian who earned her MS in Agricultural Economics at the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB). They were among eight awardees.



Dr. Maria Cristeta N. Cuaresma, SEARCA's Program Head for Graduate Education and Institutional Development, presents a token to Dr. Ngo Bunthanh, Rector of the Royal University of Agriculture, Cambodia, in appreciation of RUA's hosting the conference.

### Scholars' theses critiqued

Among the conference participants, were members of the IDRC-SEARCA project's Advisory Committee: Dr. Prasit Wangpakattananawong, CMU Professor; Dr. Mom Seng, RUA Vice Rector; Dr. Vo-Tong Xuan, Rector of Nam Can Tho University, Vietnam; Dr. Oscar B. Zamora, UPLB Professor Emeritus; and Dr. Percy E. Sajise, SEARCA Senior Fellow.

On 28 January, they were joined by Dr. Silinthone Sacklokham, Vice Dean of the National University of Laos and fellow Advisory Committee member,

and Dr. Annie Wesley, IDRC Senior Program Specialist, at a special session wherein they critiqued the thesis proposals presented by 20 IDRC-SEARCA scholars.

With them was Dr. Somsak Srisontisuk, International Program Head and Director of the Master of Rural Development Management program of Khon Kaen University, Thailand, who served as a resource person and also offered recommendations for improvement of the research proposals. (Reports from ECAAsilo)

## SEARCA scholar shares views on what makes an industry leader

SINGAPORE—A Filipino SEARCA scholar pursuing his MS in Soil Science at the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) shared his views at a Syngenta-led forum held on 24 February 2016 at Shangri-La Rasa Sentosa Resort.

Mr. Arsenio D. Bulfa, Jr. served as one of the panelists at the panel discussion titled *Outside In: Experts share their views on what it takes to be an industry leader*. The event was part of Syngenta's

efforts to gain insight from peers in the industry as well as to deepen the understanding of the challenges and opportunities in the sustainable business and agriculture space.

Participants in the panel discussion included professionals from the academe, research institutions, a farmers organization, a multinational corporation, and civil society. They shared their perspective and experiences on topics such as the current landscape of agriculture in the Asia-Pacific region, industry best (and worst) practices, and how organizations can shift toward sustainable practices. Mr. Bulfa, Dean of the College of Agriculture at the Foundation University in Dumaguete City, Philippines, represented the academic sector. (ADBulfa)



Mr. Arsenio D. Bulfa, Jr. (right), a Filipino, answers a question from the audience about the challenges in agriculture in the academe.

## Acupuncture improves water buffalo fertility, milk production

LOS BAÑOS, Philippines—The use of acupuncture in increasing the productive and reproductive performance of water buffaloes shows a lot of promise, especially with the demand for a low-cost yet natural and sustainable system of production and medicine.

This was revealed by Dr. Jezie A. Acorda, Professor of Veterinary Medicine, University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB), during his SEARCA Professorial Chair lecture titled *Role of Acupuncture in Increasing Productive Efficiency of Water Buffaloes* on 22 February 2016 at the UPLB College of Veterinary Medicine. He said the potential of water buffaloes for meat and dairy in the Philippines has not been maximized because of low fertility and low milk production.

Aside from the more popular conventional needle acupuncture, Dr. Acosta said other methods of acupuncture, such as aquapuncture, cupping, electroacupuncture, microwave acupuncture, and moxibustion, are now being practiced by licensed veterinarians.

Acupuncture used in the production of analgesia and therapy of various disorders have been extensively studied in dairy cattle, beef cattle, sheep, and goat. On the other hand, research on the use of acupuncture in water buffaloes is quite limited and mostly conducted by Dr. Acorda.

His investigations showed that hypodermic needle acupuncture and the use of herbal solutions for aquapuncture, can help prevent respiratory and digestive diseases in water buffaloes. He said it can also be used to complement conventional medical procedures.



Dr. Jezie A. Acorda

“More research is needed to see how acupuncture can address reproductive and productive efficiencies in water buffaloes. While arguments against the use of alternative medicine remain, to smallholder livestock raisers what is important is that these methods can bring a cure,” Dr. Acorda pointed out.

Since acupuncture is relatively cheap and environment-friendly and there is a growing trend for a more natural system of production, he is optimistic that acupuncture can find a niche in improving the productive and reproductive performance of water buffaloes, particularly by smallholder raisers in the Philippines.

The SEARCA Regional Professorial Chair is an annual grant that recognizes outstanding Southeast Asian experts in the academe who have championed inclusive and sustainable agricultural and rural development (ISARD) in Southeast Asia. The areas of expertise include social sciences, marine and fishery sciences, environmental sciences, economics, and rural development. (JSLaranas)

## DA trainers learn to facilitate systematic adaptation assessment

SEARCA organized and hosted the *Training of DA Trainers on Integrating Climate Change Adaptation into Policies, Plans and Programs in Agriculture* on 11-15 January 2016.

The participants were 25 training staff of the Philippine Department of Agriculture (DA) tasked to conduct the training programs under the *DA Adaptation and Mitigation Initiative in Agriculture (AMIA)* project whose capacity

building component is implemented by SEARCA and the University of the Philippines Los Baños Foundation, Inc. (UPLBFI).

The training equipped participants with knowledge and skills that will enable them to explain the philosophy of training and management of learning as well as assess their own capacities as persons, facilitators, and training managers.

They also learned to apply the fundamental principles and methods of adult or experiential learning in designing and conducting a training course on *Integrating Climate Change Adaptation into Policies, Plans and Programs in Agriculture*.

The participants were also introduced to the Harvard Case Method and the four-step approach to the systematic adaptation assessment, which they applied during the walk-through or simulation of the methodology for a hypothetical case.

The framework of the trainers' training was based on courses and materials that follow the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Policy Guidance on Integrating Climate Change Adaptation into Development Co-operation. The training modules used were developed and widely tested by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. For this trainers' training, SEARCA included four out of 10 core modules in the training design. (CRBuendia)



Dr. Daylinda B. Cabanilla (standing in the center), professor at the Department of Social Forestry and Forest Governance at UPLB, facilitates the levelling off session at the beginning of the training. She also served as the technical coordinator of the training.



# SEARCA project surveys rice, corn, and coconut farm areas

The *Linking Farmers to the Market: Towards Transforming Subsistence Farms to Commercial Farms* project team conducted a reconnaissance survey and participatory rapid area appraisal (PRA) in the potential project sites in the provinces of Isabela, Cagayan, Nueva Ecija, Pangasinan, and Quezon in Luzon; Iloilo in the Visayas; and Lanao del Norte, Zamboanga del Norte, Bukidnon, and North Cotabato in Mindanao from December 2015 to March 2016.

The project is funded by the Philippine Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Agricultural Research (DA-BAR) and implemented by SEARCA.

## Scoping phase

The reconnaissance survey, along with PRA, aimed to validate the suitability of the selected areas for data collection and determine whether the statistics about these selected areas reflect the current situation in the municipality in terms of rice, corn, and coconut production. The survey likewise traced the chain of activities for said crops and their products and found out whether there are unique enterprises for these crops.

Results of these scoping activities will serve as basis for the sampling design, selection of individuals or groups, and case study and household survey sites.

## Market tie-ups

Regardless of the crop they produced, all the municipalities visited had market-credit tie-up between the farmers and their product outlets. The outlets are usually input providers or money lenders and traders, but some farmers are still able to sell their produce to other groups or individuals.



Yellow corn on cobs being packed in Sumilao, Bukidnon, Philippines.

It was also noted that yellow corn can be described as “commercialized” because there is already an established market for it. There are large buyers and processors of yellow corn like Mindanao Grains in Malaybalay, Bukidnon.

On the other hand, the project team found that white corn was produced at the subsistence level only. These observations lead to the question of where producers of “chichacorn”—fried and crunchy glutinous white corn kernels sold as snacks in the Philippines—and the like get their raw products.

## Value added to crops

Meanwhile, there are a number of value-added products made from coconut, with cooking oil as the primary product, but farmers sell their harvested coconut either as whole nut or copra.

The value chain for rice was found to be simple as it is only sold as milled rice after processing and as palay in its raw form. In Malasiqui, Pangasinan, farmers have a rice processing complex as another outlet for their palay aside from the usual traders and agents and, on occasion, the National

Food Authority (NFA). In Iloilo, El Niño and lack of irrigation facilities resulted to either crop failure or absence of second cropping. Its irrigation system is currently being rehabilitated by the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) due to the damage caused by Typhoon Frank (also known as Typhoon Fengshen) in June 2008.

Value added to rice, corn, and coconut was also determined. The most notable product from these crops is the rice crackers made by a family business in Iloilo and sold to small stores in the capital city. The project team noted that the enterprise’s reliance on sun-drying would hinder the business expansion unless they invest in technology that makes drying possible even when sunlight is scarce.

A full report on observations and results of the reconnaissance survey and PRA will be presented to DA-BAR by the project team led by Dr. Prudenciano U. Gordoncillo, Associate Professor, University of the Philippines Los Baños-Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics. (ZEBalangué/ACPastolero)



Rice crackers being sun-dried in Leganes, Iloilo, Philippines.



# Indonesian tops SEARCA Photo Contest 2015



Indonesian Yusuf Ahmad romped off with the top prize in the SEARCA Photo Contest 2015 for his picture of a child helping farmers process cocoa in Bambang, South Sulawesi, highlighting how Indonesian farmers controlled cocoa pests which have lowered yields in the past decade.

The art contest, which had “From Farm to Plate: Smallholders’ Participation in Inclusive Value Chains” as its theme, was open to Southeast Asians from 15 September to 30 November 2015.

SEARCA received more than 1,400 entries submitted by 392 photographers from Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia,

Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam.

The 2015 edition of the SEARCA Photo Contest sought entries that best captured how smallholders participate in the value chains (production, aggregation, processing, and distribution) of fresh produce (crop and livestock), commodities, and handicrafts as a means of promoting agricultural and rural development.

In second place is a photo of Arturo de Vera, Jr., a Filipino, that shows a fisherman delivering his newly caught fish right in a family’s doorstep in Malabon City, Metro Manila.

Hansa Tangmanpoowadol, a Thai, won the third prize for his photo of a woman-farmer harvesting strawberries in the Royal Agriculture Station Angkhang in Chiangmai province, northern Thailand.

Zay Yar Lin of Myanmar bagged the People’s Choice award for his photo of an old potter passing on clay pots to a girl in Twantae, Irrawaddy Division. The photo was selected by at least 6,600 people via online voting on Facebook.

The winners received cash prizes and plaques of recognition. The winning entries will be showcased in a virtual gallery on the SEARCA website. (LLDDomingo)