

The SEARCA DIARY



A PUBLICATION OF THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN REGIONAL CENTER
FOR GRADUATE STUDY AND RESEARCH IN AGRICULTURE

VOL.46 NO.3 SEP 2017



LANDSCAPES AND AGROBIODIVERSITY

Is sparing land or sharing land better for agrobiodiversity and meeting food needs in the future? The debate goes on.

Photo by Agus Budi Gunawan

Groundbreaking workshop uncovers need for agrobiodiversity awareness

CHIANG MAI, Thailand—The need to raise awareness of the importance of agricultural biodiversity—or agrobiodiversity—to sustainable development and food security was a basic concern underscored at the *Regional Workshop on Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Agriculture for Sustainable Development and Food Security in Southeast Asia* hosted by Maejo University (MJU) on 12-14 September this city.

The workshop was jointly convened by SEARCA, the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB), and MJU with support from the European Union (EU) through the EU-funded *Biodiversity Conservation and Management of Protected Areas in ASEAN (BCAMP)* implemented by ACB.

More than 70 representatives from the ministries of environment and agriculture of the ASEAN Member States, universities as well as research, development, and nongovernmental organizations participated in the workshop.

WHAT'S INSIDE

- 03 SEARCA co-organizes Philippines-France Forum on Agriculture
- 03 SEARCA asserts import of ISARD, agrobiodiversity at int'l symposium
- 04 3 AMS push country proposals for ASRF grants
- 05 EU-funded Sustainability Transitions Summer School a success
- 05 Research studies showcased at UC Graduate Forum
- 06 Joint climate change scholarships with DOST broached
- 06 AgriMuseum initiative gets SEA education ministers' nod, SEAMEO support
- 07 SEARCA pushes anew for agritourism
- 07 Taiwan Ministry of Foreign Affairs strengthens ties with SEARCA
- 08 Saguiguít feted with SEAMEO Service Award
- 08 Thai GB Member visits SEARCA
- 09 The HEAD Foundation and SEARCA sign accord
- 09 SEARCA participates in SEAMEO Staff Exchange Program
- 10 Asia-Pacific agri advisory network apprised of collaboration
- 10 SEARCA, IFAD, APIRAS convene regional meet
- 11 SEARCA's community dev't experience bared in Indonesia forum
- 11 SEARCA joins web TV series on 2030 agenda for sustainable dev't
- 12 Scholars apprised on SEARCA scholarship policies
- 12 Refresher course in English held
- 13 SEARCA scholars trained on thesis proposal writing
- 13 Team building bolsters fellowship among SEARCA scholars
- 14 German-funded crop systems modelling course conducted
- 14 Mentorship program to communicate agri, fisheries takes off
- 15 SEARCA links up with Phl local gov't for ISARD programs
- 15 Los Baños science festival culminates at SEARCA
- 16 Agri transformation, market integration project launched in Phl



Participants during the last day of the workshop led by Dr. Saguiguit.

The workshop uncovered the absence of a clear and adequate articulation of agrobiodiversity in existing regional and national policy frameworks and programs that deal with agriculture or biodiversity despite its essential links to food systems and nutrition and its importance in enhancing local livelihoods.

However, there are initiatives on the ground from which significant lessons can be learned. These include traditional ecological knowledge and sustainable use of agrobiodiversity, integration of agrobiodiversity into local development programs and related initiatives for building capacities of communities and governments, and integration of conservation of plant genetic diversity with landscape-level planning and decentralized government programming. Other related efforts asserted the crucial link between gender, capacity building, and the local knowledge systems and their relevance to sustainable development.

These challenges and opportunities provide impetus for the development of a regional action plan on agrobiodiversity mainstreaming, conservation, and sustainable use.

The participants identified the strategic action points along the four elements of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) program of work: assessments, adaptive management (tweaked

to innovations and best practices for purposes of the workshop), capacity-building, and mainstreaming. The outputs of their discussions will serve as inputs to the regional action plan.

In his keynote paper, Dr. Percy E. Sajise, SEARCA Senior Fellow, stressed the importance of agrobiodiversity as a basic element of sustainable development and its multi-functionality, serving as link to productivity and resilience of ecosystems; buffer for climate change; and basic foundation for food security, human health, and ecosystems services.

Dr. Sajise discussed biodiversity as it relates to the ASEAN vision of sustainable development; the status and capacity of achieving ASEAN biodiversity and agrobiodiversity conservation and sustainable use targets; and opportunities and challenges in the conservation, sustainable use, and mainstreaming of agrobiodiversity in the region.

He offered recommendations to mainstream biodiversity in agriculture, including documentation of good practices in deploying and managing agrobiodiversity in ASEAN; research on the “hidden values” of agrobiodiversity; sustained and properly valued agrobiodiversity services; developing a regional agrobiodiversity database; networking of seed banks at the community, national, and regional levels to better respond to disasters and climate change for food and nutrition security; recognition of outstanding biodiversity programs at all levels; upscaling of best practices; providing market incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of agrobiodiversity; and improving inter-pillar coordination in ASEAN in terms of complementarity for biodiversity and sustainable natural resource management.

Dr. Wayne Nelles, Visiting Scholar of Chulalongkorn University School of Agricultural Resources (CUSAR), served as the workshop technical coordinator. (Report from CNGRogel)



Atty. Roberto V. Oliva, ACB Executive Director, gives his welcome remarks.



Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, delivers his closing remarks.



Dr. Wayne Nelles, the workshop Technical Coordinator, presents the country status of agrobiodiversity in ASEAN as part of his background study and working paper for the regional workshop.

THE SEARCA DIARY

Web: www.searca.org
E-mail: post@searca.org
Mail: SEARCA, College, Los Baños,
Laguna 4031 Philippines
Tel: (63-49) 536-2290, 554-9331 to 9336;
(63-2) 657-1300 to 1302 local 1005
Fax: (63-49) 536-7097

Production Team

Editor: Leah Lyn D. Domingo
Editorial Advisers: Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr.
Adoracion T. Robles
Graphic Designer: Edwin Robert A. Cortes

SEARCA co-organizes Philippines-France Forum on Agriculture



MANILA, Philippines—SEARCA was one of the organizers of the *Philippines-France Forum on Agriculture* coincided with the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between France and the Philippines this year. The

forum was led by the French Embassy in Manila and the Philippine Department of Agriculture.

Photo shows Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr. (front, third from left), SEARCA Director, with Philippine Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel F. Piñol (front,

second from left); Mr. Amaury Parelle (back, leftmost), Scientific Attache, French Embassy in Manila; Dr. Maria Cristeta N. Cuaresma (front, second from right) and Dr. Maria Celeste H. Cadiz (front, rightmost), both SEARCA Program Heads; Dr. Mariliza V. Ticsay (back, second from right); and other SEARCA staff.

During the anniversary event, the Philippines and France signed an administrative arrangement that aims to promote bilateral trade and cooperation in agricultural, fishery and food products. The accord calls for the creation of a Joint Agricultural Steering Committee (JASC), which will implement administrative arrangements and facilitate linkages between the relevant organizations, companies, and key stakeholders of the two countries in each of the areas of cooperation.

The event brought together multi-sectoral groups and researchers from France and the Philippines. They shared strategies that have been scientific as well as socially and environmentally efficient in addressing the stakeholders' problems related to the effects of climate change on food security. (LLDDomingo)

SEARCA asserts import of ISARD, agrobiodiversity at int'l symposium

SEMARANG, Indonesia—SEARCA participated in and supported the *2nd International Symposium on Food and Agrobiodiversity (ISFA 2017)* convened by Diponegoro University and the Indonesian Food Technologists (IFT) here on 26-27 September 2017.

Dr. Bessie M. Burgos, SEARCA Program Head for Research and Development, was one of four keynote speakers of the symposium, which had the theme "Developing Sustainable Agriculture and Food Production."

In her paper titled "Building ISARD with Agrobiodiversity: Towards Food Security and Community Livelihoods," Dr. Burgos discussed, among others, the rationale behind SEARCA's focus on inclusive and sustainable agricultural and rural development (ISARD) in its current Five-year Plan. She tackled why agriculture remains important, and the issues and challenges that frame the context and defining elements of ISARD. She shared lessons drawn from SEARCA's five decades of experience in ARD, including the importance of community participation; understanding community context and needs; strategic networking and linkages for financial, technical, institutional and market support; ecosystems/landscape approach to planning; development of entrepreneurship and participation in agricultural value chains; inter- and transdisciplinary approach to R&D; and mainstreaming biodiversity in agriculture.

The ISFA 2017 was attended by more than 120 participants from Indonesia and outside the country. It featured 104 papers on food process and engineering, food safety and security, agriculture for healthy future, agriculture economics, agricultural production systems, and agriculture biotechnology. (BMBurgos)



Dr. Burgos presents SEARCA publications to Prof. Yos Johan Utama, Rector of Diponegoro University.

3 AMS push country proposals for ASRF grants

The ASEAN Working Group on Social Forestry (AWG-SF) Strategic Response Fund (ASRF) managed by SEARCA is designed to provide leaders and focal points on social forestry of ASEAN Member States (AMS) with seed fund to enable them to respond to immediate needs or catalyze strategic actions that will address emerging issues and opportunities to which response of the AMS and AWG-SF is critical.

For the second call for proposals, the SEARCA-ASRF program management unit pilot-tested a project development toolkit it created to assist ASEAN Member States (AMS) in developing strategic proposals that respond to emerging issues on food insecurity, poverty, and climate change.

Lao PDR targets to improve village forest, NTFP management

VIENTIANE, Lao PDR—The Lao Department of Forestry (DoF) developed a proposal to improve the guidelines on and harmonize approaches to village forest (VF) and non-timber forest product (NTFP) management on 26-28 September 2017.

Participated in by DOF staff from various divisions, the workshop was led by DOF's VF and NTFP Management Division, headed by its Director, Dr. Oupakone Alounsavath, who is also the AWG-SF Leader of Lao PDR and a SEARCA alumnus. Mr. Khamla Sinthavong of DOF-VFNTFPM Division facilitated the workshop.

The proposal stemmed from the validation of the gap analysis at the levels of the AWG-SF Plan of Action and the national agenda presented by SEARCA and Dr. Alounsavath, respectively.

In his closing remarks, Dr. Alounsavath said the government already developed guidelines on

VF and NTFP management, but there is a need to harmonize the different approaches used by the Lao government and local and international organizations.

The proposed project will also capacitate forestry officers to improve the services they provide to the villages. Its outcomes can serve as basis for policy recommendations.

Phil seeks to document benefit-sharing mechanisms of CBFM-POs

MANILA, Philippines—The country's Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Forest Management Bureau (DENR-FMB) presented a proposal to document benefit-sharing mechanisms of Community-based Forest Management-People's Organizations (CBFM-POs) on 15 September 2017. The proposed project aims to promote cross-learning among CBFM-POs and other CBFM practitioners and produce a policy brief/technical bulletin containing a menu of benefit-sharing mechanisms for CBFM-POs to choose from.

Mr. Orlando Panganiban, who heads DENR-FMB and is the AWG-SF Leader of the Philippines, underscored the need to identify policy and research gaps on access and benefit-sharing mechanisms, particularly since many CBFM-POs are still poor.

Myanmar proposes to assess marketable NTFPs

YEZIN, Myanmar—The Forest Research Institute (FRI) of Myanmar developed a proposal to

assess marketable Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) in the country's various agro-ecological zones on 8-10 August 2017. The proposal was crafted after the validation of the gap analysis at the levels of the AWG-SF Plan of Action and the national agenda presented by Ms. Amy Lecciones on behalf of SEARCA.

Participants of the workshop came from Myanmar institutions and organizations involved in social forestry. Dr. Ei Ei Hlaing of FRI facilitated the workshop.

Dr. Thauang Naing Oo, AWG-SF Leader of Myanmar, stressed the importance of NTFP research in advancing social forestry in Myanmar. The proposed project is in line with the priorities of the national government and will become the baseline for the development of NTFP industry in various agro-ecological zones. Project outcomes can also serve as recommendation for policymakers. (Reports from XGBCapiña)



Ms. Carmen Nyhria G. Rogel (left), SEARCA Program Specialist, and Mr. Xyrus Capiña (right), Project Associate, represented the ASRF in a visit to the Lao DOF-VFNTFPM Division headed by Dr. Oupakone Alounsavath (center).



Participants of the ASRF meeting in Myanmar held on 8-10 August 2017.

EU-funded Sustainability Transitions Summer School a success

BOGOR, Indonesia—The European Union (EU)-funded summer school of the Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC) had 31 students, 17 of whom are under the newly established Master of Science in Food Security and Climate Change (MSFSCC).

Initiated by SEARCA in 1989, the UC is a strong network of nine leading universities in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Japan, Canada, and Germany.

Billed as “Sustainability Transitions 2017,” this year’s UC Summer School is part of the ERASMUS+ project which established the joint MSFSCC in UC members. ERASMUS+ is the EU program for education, training, youth, and sport.

Held on 10-28 July 2017 at Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) in Bogor, the UC Summer School was jointly organized by UGM, one of the founding

members of the UC, and Austria’s University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (BOKU).

Focus on agroforestry

The participants were 17 MSFSCC students, six students from SEARCA’s International Development Assistance (IDA) partner universities, eight from BOKU, and another group of MS students from UGM.

This year’s theme “Integrated Agro-Forestry Farming Systems: a Transition to Food Security in a Changing Climate” was tackled through lectures, case studies, group discussions, and a field visit to the Merapi volcano area. The lecturers came from the UC members and BOKU.

The summer school culminated with a conference on 21 July that showcased the results of the students’ field study in the villages of Penanggungan and Laksana in Banjarnegara District, Central Java, Indonesia. The students were divided into groups that each assessed the sustainability of the villages’ agroforestry system in terms of the ecological, economic, and social aspects. They also determined if the villages were “in transition,” that is, if there were any structural changes in the food system processes that give

rise to new and more socially and environmentally sustainable production and consumption modes.

After the summer school, the 17 MSFSCC students took their courses for the first semester at their home universities and begin their mobilities in their host universities in January 2018. Said mobilities are co-funded by ERASMUS+ and the UC.

A regular UC activity

The Summer School has been a regular activity of the UC with the hosting being rotated among its members. With SEARCA as its secretariat, the UC also conducts an annual graduate forum, collaborates on research projects, and provides student and faculty grants to its members.

Twenty-eight years since launching the UC, SEARCA continues its active role in the consortium, which it sees as a viable approach to pursuing agricultural human resource development in Southeast Asia through free exchange of information, facilities, and expertise; offering of dissertation doctorate and dual degree scholarships; and a joint MS degree program to push internationalization of higher education institutions in Southeast Asia. (Report from CJVEnables)



Participants, resource persons, and organizers of the Sustainability Transitions Summer School.

Research studies showcased at UC Graduate Forum

BANGKOK, Thailand—Thirty-one students from seven members of the SEARCA-initiated Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC) converged at Kasetsart University (KU) here on 17-18 August 2017. They joined the *3rd UC Graduate Forum*, which had the theme “Combatting Food and Energy Insecurity and Climate Change through Sustainable and Inclusive Agricultural Technologies and Innovations.”

Dr. Chongrak Wachrinrat, KU President, opened the forum after a message given by Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director. Dr. Chantavit Sujatanond, Director of SEAMEO Regional Center for Higher Education and Development (RIHED), keynoted the event.

Dr. Saguiguit credited the UC for the expansion of SEARCA’s scholarship programs to cover joint or dual degree scholarships, as well as sandwich or exchange programs. He noted that the graduate

forum reinforces institutional ties among the UC members.

For her part, Dr. Chantavit commended the UC for conducting such forum for graduate students in agriculture. She pointed out that while many young people want to go into fields of study related to information technology, these fields cannot feed people. She encouraged the UC to expand and include universities from other countries in Southeast Asia.

[Research studies/ to page 6](#)

Joint climate change scholarships with DOST broached



At the opening of the annual Los Baños National Science and Technology Week (NSTW) celebration dubbed “SyenSaya” on 2 August 2017, Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr. (right), SEARCA Director, discussed briefly with Philippine

Science and Technology Secretary Fortunato T. de la Peña (left) the possibility for SEARCA to collaborate with the Philippine Department of Science and Technology (DOST), particularly on scholarships intended to develop capacities and expertise of Filipinos to address climate change.

In the past, SEARCA has had sporadic collaborations with DOST, including those with its precursor, the National Science and Development Board

(NSDB). NSDB funded a nationwide program called the Social Laboratory, a strategy for rural and agricultural development carried out in partnership with higher education institutions (HEIs) to uplift the socioeconomic conditions of rural farming communities.

Dr. Saguiguit said “in view of the changing landscape of agriculture and SEARCA’s focus on promoting inclusive and sustainable agricultural and rural development (ISARD), it is imperative that we look to S&T in order to produce more from less.”

He underscored that it is toward this end that SEARCA is exploring possibilities to collaborate with DOST on agricultural R&D and capacity building initiatives, including said scholarships for advanced studies on climate change. (LLDDomingo)

AgriMuseum initiative gets SEA education ministers’ nod, SEAMEO support

JAKARTA, Indonesia—Eleven education ministers who constitute the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) Council and the SEAMEO Secretariat have affirmed their support for SEARCA’s proposal to establish the Southeast Asian AgriMuseum and Learning Center. Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, presented the concept of the interactive museum at the *49th SEAMEO Council Conference (SEAMEC)* held here on 24-26 July 2017.

The SEAMEO Council agreed to assist in SEARCA’s efforts to invite contributions from partners, including governments and the public and private sector, particularly food and agri-related companies that could contribute to it as part of their corporate social responsibility.

SEARCA sees the AgriMuseum as an innovative education facility to promote awareness and draw attention to agriculture and its all-important

role in food security, poverty alleviation, and overall development of economies in the region that are highly dependent on it. As such, it will benefit the youth, development practitioners, policy and decision-makers, researchers, and media professionals.

Dr. Saguiguit added that the AgriMuseum, as one of the first of its kind in Southeast Asia, will put on center stage the history, science-based knowledge and innovations in agriculture, cross-cultural and cross-ecosystem comparisons, current issues and challenges, and futures of agricultural and food systems in Southeast Asia. (LLDDomingo)

Research studies/ from page 5

Students took turns presenting their research results in three parallel sessions under the following sub-themes: Agriculture and Life Sciences, Agro-Industry, and Agribusiness and Agricultural Extension. They also visited three research centers at KU’s Kamphaeng Saen campus which boast of state-of-the-art facilities and research programs, and get a taste of the famous “KU Beef.”

The Graduate Forum is an annual activity of the UC, hosted by member universities on rotational basis. This year’s graduate forum saw paper presentations from seven students of Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), six from the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB), six from Institut Pertanian



The 3rd UC Graduate Forum participants.

Bogor (IPB), five from Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM), three from KU, three from Universitas Brawijaya (UB), and one from Tokyo University of Agriculture (Tokyo NODAI). The students left KU

with a better understanding of the UC, a network of friends from other universities, and a glimpse of the researches being undertaken by students in other major fields. (Report from MCNCuaresma)

SEARCA pushes anew for agritourism

SIEM REAP, Cambodia—SEARCA's renewed attention to agritourism is aligned with an emerging consensus in the ASEAN that it is a way to showcase sustainable farming systems and augment farmers' incomes.

This was one of the topics discussed at a Partners Forum prior to a meeting of agriculture ministers of Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) countries convened by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in Siem Reap on 6-8 September 2017. Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, and Ms. Adoracion T. Robles, Unit Head for Management Services and Executive Coordinator, Office of the Director, attended the forum.

SEARCA was invited to share its research and development programs relevant to safe and environmentally friendly agro-based value chains that could benefit the GMS countries, namely: Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam, and the People's Republic of China.

“SEARCA has long recognized that agritourism is a viable vehicle for promoting sustainable



Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr. (center), SEARCA Director, with Dr. Seng Mom (left), Vice Rector of Cambodia's Royal University of Agriculture, and Ms. Adoracion T. Robles (right), Officer-in-Charge, Office of the Deputy Director for Administration, at the Siem Reap Policy Forum convened by ADB on 6 September 2017.

agriculture and, at the same time, tourism as a value adding activity,” Dr. Saguiguit said.

He stressed that it could help in addressing the waning interest in agriculture, especially among the youth and urban dwellers.

Dr. Saguiguit added that “we started on this track a couple of years ago by convening the *First National Agritourism Research Conference in the Philippines* in 2012. We learned there is indeed increasing interest in this approach, particularly in GMS and Southeast Asian countries, owing to the diversity and uniqueness of their farming and rural landscape.” (LLDDomingo)

Taiwan Ministry of Foreign Affairs strengthens ties with SEARCA

Officials of Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) led by Mr. Andrew Hsein Chang Lee, Director-General of the Ministry's Public Diplomacy Coordination Council, visited SEARCA as part of its efforts to promote bilateral exchanges and cooperation in agriculture between Taiwan and the Philippines.

The other members of the Taiwanese delegation were Ms. Hsiao-Chun Hung, Section Chief, International Cooperation, Department of International Affairs, Council of Agriculture; Ms. Hsuan-Wen Chu, Officer, Public Diplomacy Coordination Council, MOFA; and Mr. Winsdon J.H. Hsiao, Deputy Director of Taipei Economic and Cultural Office (TECO), Manila; and 15 graduate students and young agricultural professionals who are among the 2017 Young Agricultural Ambassadors Program of MOFA and Taiwan's Council for Agriculture. They were received by SEARCA officials and key staff.

The ambassador's program aims to renew interest of younger generations of Taiwanese in agriculture as a field of study and source of livelihood. It is part of Taiwan's five-plus-two innovative industries initiative that promotes the continuous development of seven sectors

of Taiwan's economy, including high-value agriculture. The program also supports the New Southbound Policy of Taiwan that aims to boost trade with ASEAN through enhanced cooperation and exchanges between Taiwan and 18 countries in Southeast Asia, South Asia, and Australasia.

Areas of possible collaboration that were discussed included organizing a regional forum on agritourism, joint scholarship programs, and internship opportunities and student exchanges for Southeast Asians.

The delegates were also apprised of SEARCA's past collaborations with the National Taiwan University (NTU) and the Taiwan Agricultural Research Institute. Having had joint scholarship and training activities, SEARCA and NTU are set to renew their formal agreement later this year. Their past collaborations included a study tour for ASEAN countries and a four-part training series, both on agricultural biotechnology, as well as an academic sandwich program of a Filipino SEARCA scholar that enabled her to do her research at NTU. (EGPandanan)



Mr. Henry M. Custodio (leftmost), SEARCA Program Specialist for Research and Development, explains to the Taiwanese delegation led by MOFA Director-General Andrew Hsein Chang Lee (second from right) the climate-smart agriculture showcased at the project sites of SEARCA's action research on piloting effective models of inclusive and sustainable agricultural and rural development (ISARD).

Saguiguit feted with SEAMEO Service Award

JAKARTA, Indonesia—For having meritoriously served SEARCA for four decades, Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, was feted with the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) Service Award at the 49th SEAMEO Council Conference (SEAMEC) held here on 24-26 July 2017.

The SEAMEO Service Award is bestowed on outstanding staff of the SEAMEO regional centers, network, and secretariat who exemplify excellence and commitment for the success of their respective organizations.

The award adds to Dr. Saguiguit's numerous distinctions received from national and international or foreign institutions for his exemplary development work in the agricultural sector. These include the *Chevalier de l'Ordre du Mérite Agricole* (Knight of the Order of Agricultural Merit) given by the French government, the Honorary Doctorate Degree in Applied Economics from Thailand's Maejo University (MJU), Outstanding Alumnus in Regional Institutional Development and Distinguished Alumnus for Agriculture and Rural Development by the



Dr. Saguiguit (rightmost) with Philippine Education Secretary Leonor M. Briones (leftmost), Undersecretary Jesus Lorenzo R. Mateo (second from right) and Undersecretary Atty. Alberto T. Muyot (center) of the Philippine Department of Education (DepEd), and Dr. Shahbaz Khan (second from left), Director of UNESCO Regional Science Bureau for Asia and the Pacific-Jakarta, after the awards ceremony.

University of the Philippines Los Baños Alumni Association (UPLBAA), and Vietnam's Medal for the Cause of Education. In 2015, Dr. Saguiguit also received on behalf of SEARCA an award for significant contributions to Myanmar's human resource development in agriculture.

Under Saguiguit's leadership, SEARCA reached unprecedented heights in collaborations on research and capacity building projects with national and international development agencies and donor organizations that flourished during his term. (LLDDomingo)

Thai GB Member visits SEARCA



Dr. Sathit Puttachaiyong (rightmost), President of Rajamangala University of Technology (RMUT) Krungthep and concurrent Country Representative of Thailand to the SEARCA Governing Board (GB), visited SEARCA on 10 July 2017. With him were four other officials of

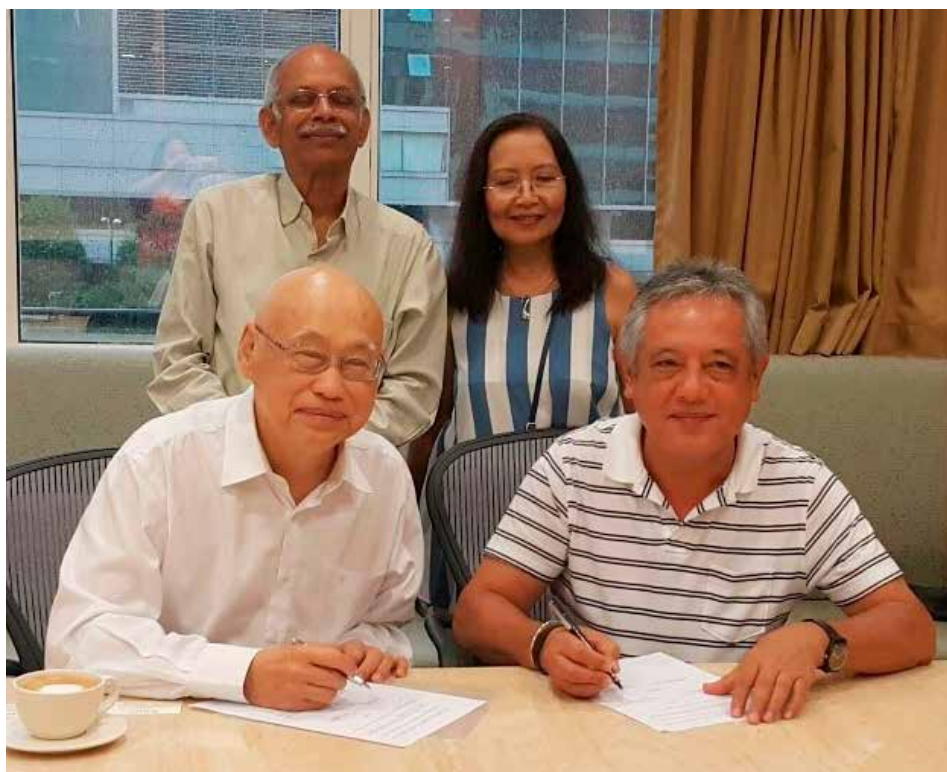
RMUT: Dr. Viroj Limkaisang (leftmost), President of RMUT Isan; Ms. Khanitta Duangpattra, Vice-President, RMUT Krungthep; Asst. Prof. Dr. Chalermpon Yuangklang, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Quality Assurance, RMUT Isan; and Asst. Prof. Dr. Ada Raimaturapong,

Vice President for University Council, RMUT Isan. They were briefed about SEARCA's programs and activities by Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr. (second from left), SEARCA Director. They were joined by Dr. Fernando C. Sanchez, Jr. (second from right), Chancellor of the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) and concurrent Chair and Country Representative of the Philippines to the SEARCA GB. SEARCA program and unit heads were also present at the briefing.

Dr. Sathit was particularly interested in SEARCA's capacity building activities, including its graduate scholarship program and short-term leadership courses which RMUT faculty, researchers, and students may avail of. RMUT is a system of nine universities with at least 40 campuses spread across Thailand.

Dr. Saguiguit said SEARCA may jointly develop with RMUT a proposal for a collaborative research project that will harness and share with other Southeast Asian countries Thailand's best practices in agricultural product innovation and development. (Report from EGPandanang)

The HEAD Foundation and SEARCA sign accord



SINGAPORE—Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr. (seated, right), SEARCA Director, and Mr. Yu-Book Lim (seated, left), Managing Director, The HEAD Foundation (THF) based here, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between their institutions on 5 July 2017. The signing was witnessed by Dr. Maria Celeste H. Cadiz (standing, right), SEARCA Program Head for Knowledge Management, and Prof. S. Gopinathan (standing, left), THF Academic Director.

THF is “a think tank devoted to the research, policy influence, and effective implementation of education for development in Asia.” Aside from conducting research in Asian countries, THF “develops and delivers tools, models, and programs for capacity building.” It also produces a host of publications and conducts seminars, workshops, and policy forums.

SEARCA and THF are keen to work together on capacity building in leadership development among higher education institutions (HEIs) in Southeast Asia. (LLDDomingo)

SEARCA participates in SEAMEO Staff Exchange Program

In August 2017, SEARCA hosted the visit of officers from Jakarta-based SEAMEO Regional Centre for Food and Nutrition (RECFON) and sent three of its own staff to the SEAMEO Secretariat in Bangkok the following month, both under the SEAMEO Staff Exchange Program. SEAMEO stands for Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization.

The exchange program provides opportunities for staff to broaden their knowledge and share best practices and experiences in their fields of expertise. It also fosters stronger ties among SEAMEO centers.

SEARCA's participation in the SEAMEO staff exchange program involves hosting of visiting staff from other SEAMEO centers and sending SEARCA staff to other SEAMEO centers. These are coordinated by the Human Resources Management Unit (HRMU) under its Staff Development Program.

SEAMES receives SEARCA staff

BANGKOK, Thailand—The SEAMEO Secretariat (SEAMES) received three administrative staff of SEARCA at its headquarters here on 20-



Dr. Gatot Hari Priowirjanto (center), SEAMES Director, and Ms. Natcha Kampiranond (leftmost), SEAMES Administration Manager, received the SEARCA delegation that visited SEAMES under the SEAMEO Staff Exchange Program.

21 September 2017. The SEARCA delegation consisted of Ms. Lovely Grace R. Urriza, HR Associate from HRMU; Ms. Adah Sofia A. Renovilla, Secretary at the Office of the Director; and Ms. Rochella B. Lapitan, Program Support Staff from the Research and Development Department.

As the executive arm of the SEAMEO Council, SEAMES has a robust administrative support services that function well in coordinating

activities and programs among SEAMEO Member Countries, centers, donors, and other partner organizations.

Ms. Natcha Kampiranond, SEAMES Administration Manager, shared relevant information about their administrative databases which include document registry, digital filing, and tracking systems, among others. Ms. Kornkanok

[SEARCA participates/ to page 12](#)

Asia-Pacific agri advisory network apprised of collaboration

BOGOR, Indonesia—SEARCA briefed the Asia Pacific Islands Regional Advisory Services (APIRAS) on their collaborative project titled “Supporting Smallholder Farmers in Asia and Pacific Islands Region through Strengthened Agricultural Advisory Services (SAAS),” at its regional meeting held on 26 August 2017 at Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB) here.



Dr. Lope B. Santos III (seated, rightmost) with other participants of the Regional Meeting on Rural Advisory Services held on 26 August 2017 at IPB.

The meeting was attended by representatives from Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and international organizations, which include the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), SEARCA, SEAMEO Regional Centre for Tropical Biology (BIOTROP), World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF), ASEAN Working Group for Agricultural Training and Education (AWGATE), Higher Education for Sustainable Agriculture (HESA), and the Food Systems in Southeast Asia Project.

Dr. Lope B. Santos III, SEARCA Unit Head for Project Development and Technical Services (PDTs), represented Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, and gave the briefing on said project funded by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

He discussed the project goals, objectives outcomes and activities, and emphasized the importance of a rural advisory services as well as engagement and support to ASEAN and development partners in policy development,

programs and projects in agricultural and rural development in the region.

A highlight of the meeting was the formation of a Working Committee for the Southeast Asia Rural Advisory Services (SEARAS) Network to be headed by Dr. Ir. Siti Amana of IPB. Dr. Budi Guntoro, who is a SEARCA alumnus and Vice Dean for Academic and Student Affairs of Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) and Dr. Santos of SEARCA are among the members of the working committee. (Report from LBSantos)

SEARCA, IFAD, APIRAS convene regional meet

INGHAM, Australia—SEARCA, in partnership with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and Asia Pacific Rural Advisory Services (APIRAS), convened a *Regional Networking Conference* on 8 September 2017 at the Tyto Conference Center here.



Dr. Lope B. Santos III (back row, second from left), SEARCA Unit Head for Project Development and Technical Services, with other participants of the Regional Networking Conference held on 8 September 2017 in Ingham, Queensland, Australia.

The conference is part of the project titled “Supporting Smallholder Farmers in Asia and Pacific-Islands Region through Strengthened Agricultural Advisory Services (SAAS)” implemented by SEARCA.

The conference discussed the status and initiatives of various rural advisory services network in the Asia Pacific region as well as updates on the SAAS project. SEARCA was represented by Dr. Lope B. Santos III, SEARCA Unit Head for Project Development and Technical Services.

The sub-networks present in the conference included the Agricultural Extension in South Asia (AESA) led by Dr. Rasheed Sulaiman, Pacific Island Rural Advisory Services (PIRAS) represented by Dr. Gibson Susumu, Mekong Extension and Learning Advisory (MELA) represented by Dr. Souonthong Namvong of Lao PDR, and the newly formed Southeast Asian Regional Advisory Services (SEARAS) being coordinated by Dr. Siti Amanah of Indonesia.

Each sub-network also shared their respective initiatives during the conference.

Dr. Rex Victor O. Cruz, former Chancellor of the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) and SAAS Project Coordinator, presented the status and accomplishments of the project in Year 1 (2016-2017), which include consummating formal agreements with the Center for Rural ISP for South Asia, the Pacific Community for Pacific Islands and Fiji, APIRAS for Southeast Asia, Bangladesh Agricultural Extension Network (BAEN) for Bangladesh, and the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) of the Department of Agriculture for the Philippines.

Dr. Cruz also reported progress on the formation of Country Fora in the three participating countries, setting up of knowledge management platform for information sharing, and initial work on capacity needs assessment (CNA) at the

country level. He noted that some delays in Year 1 will be covered in the Year 2.

Dr. Tom Mwangi Anyonge, IFAD Senior Program Officer, noted the progress and initiatives of various networks and suggested to look at the governance aspects of the network to be more effective and sustainable. He mentioned that there may be a need to revisit the SAAS framework, including its expected outcomes and outputs, to be more realistic given that the project has a duration of only three years. He also thanked SEARCA for serving as institutional home of the SAAS project.

A side event of the annual meeting of the Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS), the conference was attended by delegates from Australia, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, the Philippines, and Switzerland. (Report from LBSantos)

SEARCA's community dev't experience bared in Indonesia forum

JAKARTA, Indonesia—SEARCA presented the major gains of its implementation strategies in community development at the *2017 Village Development Forum* themed “Representing the Village: Democracy, Autonomy, and Prosperity” convened on 24-25 August 2017 here. SEARCA joined the forum on the invitation of Indonesia's Ministry of Villages, Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration.

With an eye to collaborate with the Indonesian government for its transmigration and community development initiatives, SEARCA highlighted its priority themes and thrusts over the past 50 years, tracing it to the focus on agricultural productivity in the late 1960s and how it evolved to community development, rural development, gender and development to agro-industrial development, agribusiness, natural resource management and agricultural competitiveness.

These were covered in a paper titled “Rural and Community Development towards Food Security and Poverty Alleviation: The SEARCA Experience” presented by Mr. Henry M. Custodio,

SEARCA Program Specialist for Research and Development.

Mr. Custodio discussed the defining elements and strategic thrusts of the SEARCA Inclusive and Sustainable Agricultural and Rural Development (ISARD) Model and how these were operationalized via effective implementation of community development projects. It also described how the SEARCA model was applied in various forms and context within the region.

SEARCA imparted two key messages. First, there is no one-size-fits-all in community development, particularly in incentivizing people to stay in or migrate to rural communities. Second, thinking global while pursuing South-South cooperation in developing agricultural communities is doable “for as long as the basic ingredients are there.”

SEARCA asserted the touchstones of its community development model as follows:

- The community must be organized to focus on their needs.

- The community must participate and have a sense of ownership of the community development initiative.
- The community must be capacitated, empowered, and be taught to help themselves.
- The community must be linked to national government agencies, local governments, and education and research institutions for technical assistance and support services.

Held at the Presidential Palace in Jakarta, the Village Development Forum's opening program was attended by Indonesia's Vice President H. Muhammad Jusuf Kalla, as well as Eko Putro Sandjojo and Ahmad Erani Yustika, Minister and Secretary General, respectively, of the Ministry of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Region, and Transmigration.

Representatives from foreign embassies in Indonesia, other Indonesian government ministries, and international organizations and academic institutions from Southeast Asia were also in attendance. Aside from delivering the paper presentation, Mr. Custodio represented SEARCA at activities related to the forum. (HMCustodio)

SEARCA joins web TV series on 2030 agenda for sustainable dev't

MANILA, Philippines—Dr. Bessie M. Burgos, SEARCA Program Head for Research and Development, served as a panelist in an episode of the web series billed “2030” led by CIFAL Philippines.

Hosted by the University of the Philippines Center for Integrative and Development Studies (UP CIDS), CIFAL Philippines is part of an international network of training centers coordinated by the United Nations Institute of Training and Research (UNITAR).

The “2030” web series is jointly developed by CIFAL Philippines with Television UP (TVUP) and 2030 Youth Force in the Philippines. TVUP is the Internet TV Network of the University of the Philippines.

Launched in September 2017 on TVUP, the web series provides an accessible platform for individuals and organizations to share how they contribute to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the Philippines. With an initial line-up of six episodes, the web series targets the youth. Episode 4 focuses on integrating climate change measures into



From right: Dr. Bessie M. Burgos, SEARCA Program Head for Research and Development; Prof. Mahar Lagmay of the UP NOAH Center; and Philippine Senator Sherwin Gatchalian served as panelists in an episode of the web series “2030” to be launched in September 2017 on TVUP. From left: Forum hosts Mr. Jules Guiang and Mr. Jayson Villagomez of the 2030 Youth Force in the Philippines.

national policies and strategies for a resilient Filipino community.

Dr. Burgos shared SEARCA's initiatives on climate change in Southeast Asia. She expounded on SEARCA's Umbrella Program on Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation for Southeast Asia (CChAM).

She also talked about SEARCA's partnerships with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Philippine Climate Change Commission (CCC) on climate resilience and green growth in ecotowns in four critical watersheds in the country.

Dr. Burgos also discussed SEARCA's role in helping the Department of Agriculture (DA) implement the first phase of its Adaptation and Mitigation Initiative in Agriculture (AMIA), particularly the landscape planning approach.

With Dr. Burgos in the panel were Philippine Senator Sherwin Gatchalian and Professor Mahar Lagmay of the University of the Philippines (UP) NOAH Center (Nationwide Operational Assessment of Hazards – NOAH Center for climate actions and disaster risk reduction management). (LLDDomingo)

Scholars apprised on SEARCA scholarship policies

SEARCA convened 64 scholars enrolled at the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) on 13 August 2017 for an orientation on their privileges and remind them of their responsibilities as SEARCA scholars.

The orientation was conducted by Dr. Maria Cristeta N. Cuaresma, SEARCA Program Head for Graduate Education and Institutional Development.

Among the 144 SEARCA currently scholars enrolled at UPLB and other study posts, 42 are

new. Hence, the meeting was also an opportunity for the scholars to get acquainted with each other and find out with whom they have common research interests.

The other SEARCA scholarship study posts are Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB) and Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) in Indonesia; Universiti Putra Malaysia; and Kasetsart University in Thailand.

Orientations in the other study posts are also being scheduled. (Report from CJVEnables)



Refresher course in English held

Thirty new SEARCA scholars were given the opportunity to enhance their English proficiency through the *Basic English Training Course for New Scholars* conducted by Prof. Emy Cervantes and her team on 18-28 July 2017 at SEARCA.

The scholars were from Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam. The course activities were designed to enhance the scholars' writing and speaking skills, which will help them in their graduate studies.



The English course is offered annually to new and ongoing scholars as part of their mandate in

capacity building of Southeast Asian scholars. It is coordinated by SEARCA's Graduate Education

and Institutional Development Department (GEIDD). (Report from CJVEnables)

SEARCA participates/ from page 9

Chureeganon, SEAMES Finance Manager, gave a briefing on their financial operations, project management, and budgetary system.

SEARCA hosts RECFON officers

Four RECFON officers visited SEARCA on 23-25 August 2017 as part of the SEAMEO Staff Exchange Program. The delegation included Dr.

Dwi Nastiti Iswarawanti, Manager for Training; Ms. Kusyanti Febriani Hapsari, Manager for Finance of Accounting; Mr. Mochammad Perbowo, Manager for Human Resources and General Affairs; and Ms. Evi Ermayani, Partnership Officer.

The RECFON contingent was briefed on SEARCA's programs and activities. They were particularly interested in knowledge management, administration of scholarship programs, short-

term training, publication and information dissemination, and network and linkages. They were also given an overview of the Center's administrative support services including finance operations, human resource management, information technology, facilities operations and general services (maintenance and security). (Report from RBLapitan and LGRUrriza)

Agri transformation/ from page 16

agricultural growth and food security in the Philippines, as well as level off on what the project hopes to achieve and the roles of the stakeholders. They also identified promising commodities for regional and global value chains.

Initial discussions centered on situating the project within the context of the state of agricultural transformation and market integration in the region and in the Philippines. This covered definitions, drivers, indicators, and key studies related to ATMI in developing Asia; the Philippines' perspective on ATMI; agricultural

trade situation in the country; agricultural value chain; and the importance of ATMI in food security and inclusiveness.

DA Undersecretary Evelyn Laviña presented the initiatives undertaken by the current administration to improve the country's agriculture sector. These include the shift to high-value crops, mechanized farming, development of a national color-coded agricultural guide map, and commodity value chain research, among others.

A panel discussion focused on the role of the private sector and farmers' organizations

in agricultural transformation and market integration.

Together, the participants helped craft a country action plan to enhance the capacity of ASEAN Member States to identify and design national strategies, policies, programs, and national agri-food value chain investment initiatives that benefit small-scale rural producers (SSRPs). They brainstormed to validate and improve on the draft action plan, particularly in the areas of policy study and identification of priority commodities for value chain research. (Report from CRBuendia)

SEARCA scholars trained on thesis proposal writing

SEARCA organized a training-workshop on Writing Thesis and Dissertation Proposals on 2-4 August 2017 for 19 of its scholars who are in various stages of preparing their thesis proposals.

The training aimed to increase the scholars' capacity to identify their research problems, find credible resources, and write their thesis proposals.

SEARCA engaged the services of a pool of reputable communication and research experts

from the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) to serve as resource persons. They are Dr. Ma. Theresa H. Velasco, Dean of the College of Development Communication (CDC) who also served as Training Facilitator; Dr. Serlie B. Jamias, UPLB Vice Chancellor for Community Affairs; Dr. Luis Rey I. Velasco, former UPLB Chancellor; Dr. Cleofe S. Torres, former Dean of CDC; Dr. Ma. Stella C. Tirol, Associate Professor; Dr. Mildred O. Moscoso, Garry Jay S. Montemayor, and Hermilea Marie C. Castillo, all Assistant Professors.

The training-workshop is one of the three regular learning events organized by SEARCA's Graduate Education and Institutional Development Department (GEIDD). The other two are Basic English Training for New SEARCA Scholars and Training for Technical Writing for Publication in a Refereed Journal and for Presentation intended for those who are about to complete their degrees. The aim is to better equip SEARCA scholars to serve them in their graduate studies as well as in their professional endeavors. (Report from CJVEnables)

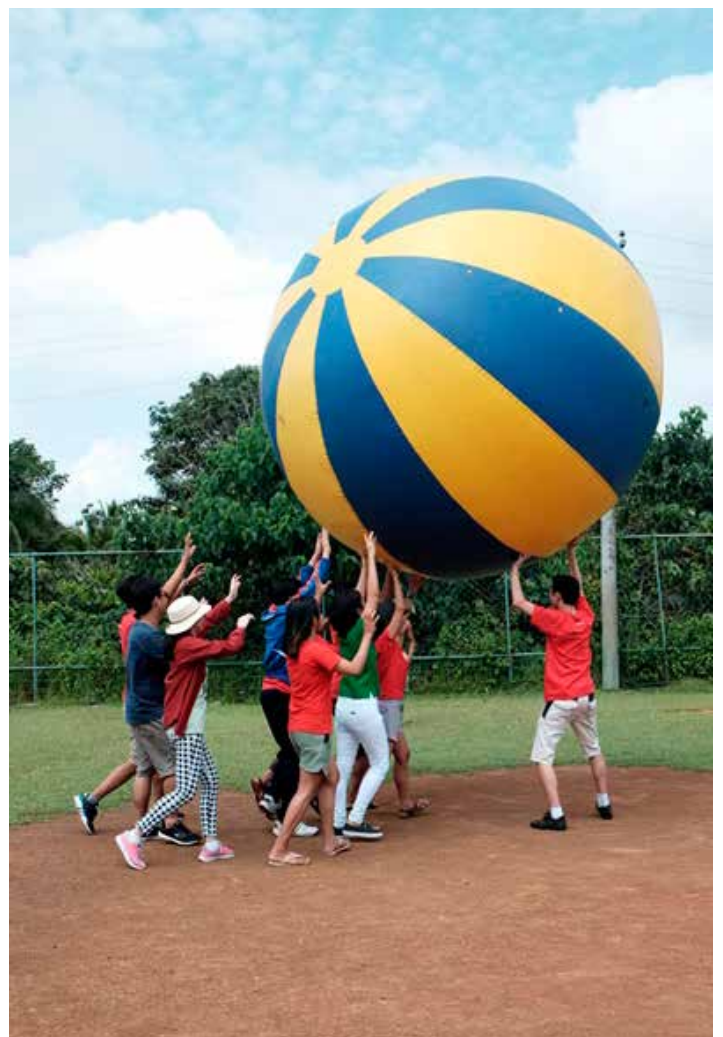
Team building bolsters fellowship among SEARCA scholars

SEARCA scholars from nine countries who are studying in the Philippines joined team building activities on 17 September 2017 at Caliraya Resort Club in Lumban, Laguna.

It was mid-semester when 45 graduate scholars from Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam spent a day playing games that aimed to foster team work and camaraderie, despite their diverse backgrounds.

During the outing, a new set of SEARCA Scholars Association (SSA) officers were also elected. The SSA officers coordinate and encourage scholars to actively participate in both SEARCA and SSA events.

Through its Graduate Education and Institutional Development Department (GEIDD), SEARCA holds team building and other skills development training annually for its scholars to make their graduate life more productive and enjoyable. (CJVEnables)



German-funded crop systems modelling course conducted

Young lecturers and graduate students from four countries gathered at SEARCA to attend the *Short Course on Cropping Systems Models and its Application for Climate Impact Assessment* on 4-2 September 2017.

The course was funded by the Food Security Center (FSC) of the University of Hohenheim in Stuttgart, Germany. SEARCA is a strategic partner of FSC, one of five EXCEED Centers funded by the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) of Germany through the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD).

The entry-level course imparted a practical approach for simulating crop production, with Dr. Perdinan, a climate risk and adaptation specialist and faculty member at the Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB)-Department of Geophysics and Meteorology, as course lecturer.

It had 27 participants from Indonesia, Myanmar, the Philippines, and Vietnam.

The course discussed the principles and approaches of crop modeling and its application for risk and impact assessments. It also covered the use of the empirical approach for estimating crop production. On the other hand, the effects of soil, weather, and management on crop production were studied using the dynamical approach. The discussions focused on capabilities and limitations of each approach and some considerations for their use.



The participants work on their crop models in small groups.



Dr. Perdinan (standing) of IPB handled the five-day course on application of cropping systems models to assess climate impact.

The participants also learned the procedures for preparing the required data and running the crop models. They worked on exercises using the crop models. They also developed the empirical

model using a spreadsheet and had hands-on assignments for dynamical approach that used the DSSAT crop models. (Report from CJVEnables)

Mentorship program to communicate agri, fisheries takes off

SEARCA conducted on 12-15 September 2017 the *Orientation and 1st Face-to-Face Session* of the Information and Knowledge Management (IKM) Mentorship Program: Communicating Agriculture and Fisheries Research for Inclusive and Sustainable Development (CAFRISD) that it is implementing for the Philippine Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Agricultural Research (DA-BAR). The activity is the first of three face-to-face sessions of the IKM Mentorship Program.

The session covered an overview of the project; an introduction to the course and Canvas LMS navigation, the online platform used by the



The participants with the SEARCA Project Team led by Prof. Llarena (seated, second from right), Project Leader, and Ms. Julia A. Lapitan (seated, rightmost), Head of the DA-BAR Applied Communication Division.

participants; and the Capstone Project, which is the final integrated output of the participants.

relation to inclusive growth and sustainable development.

DA officers shared their knowledge about the Philippine rural development projects, Community-based participatory action researches, and technical commercialization in

The IKM Mentoring Program and face-to-face sessions are implemented by SEARCA through its Project Development and Technical Services (PDTs). (MFBangabang)

SEARCA links up with Phl local gov't for ISARD programs

SEARCA has firmed up its linkages with the Philippine Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) and local government units (LGUs) at the *Provincial Alliance Building Dialogue for the Province of Laguna* as an alternative approach to reach farmers and grassroots communities. SEARCA hosted the dialogue on 8 August 2017 in partnership with the DILG.

“Development must start at the grassroots,” stressed Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, “and our ally in reaching those communities are LGUs, through whom we are able to deliver and extend our program initiatives focused primarily on bringing about inclusive and sustainable agricultural and rural development (ISARD).”

He said “SEARCA is now increasingly invited to multisectoral meetings to see how we can input into their development plans, particularly on how they relate to agriculture.”



Dr. Saguiguit (left) explains to Laguna Governor Hernandez the gains of SEARCA's school and home gardens program in six pilot schools and its prospects for the schools in the rest of the province of Laguna.

The dialogue brought together chief local government executives of the cities and municipalities of Laguna, including Laguna Governor Ramil L. Hernandez.

Governor Hernandez expressed his support and endorsement of SEARCA's school and home gardens program to be spread throughout the province. This project was highlighted in Dr. Saguiguit's briefing to the governor and several town mayors.

SEARCA's Participatory Action Research on School- and Community-based Food and Nutrition Program for Literacy, Poverty Reduction,

and Sustainable Development was piloted in five elementary and one high school in six towns in Laguna. Carried out in partnership with the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) and the Department of Education (DepED) Division of Laguna, the project's key accomplishments focused on nutrition, education, and economic well-being.

Moreover, Governor Hernandez is keen to engage SEARCA in his farmers' education initiative. He suggested that SEARCA take the food and nutrition program a notch higher to the level of farmers through SEARCA's involvement in his provincial government's farmer field schools. (LLDDomingo)

Los Baños science festival culminates at SEARCA

SEARCA hosted the *R&D Awarding and Closing Ceremonies* of “SyenSaya 2017,” the annual science festival organized by the Los Baños Science Community Foundation, Inc. (LBSCFI), on 4 August 2017. This year's theme was “Science for the People: S&T in Harmony with Biodiversity.”

SEARCA was one of the founding members of LBSCFI, which now has 22 member agencies. A banner program of the Foundation, SyenSaya creates heightened awareness of how science and technology (S&T) improves the quality of life.

In his message, Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, stressed that increased investment in agricultural R&D is vital to the country's growth and overall development, and reiterated SEARCA's support for capacity building and developing a new breed of researchers and professionals to take up the challenge of nation building.

The International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) won the PARRFI R&D Award (Research Category) for its research titled “Biofortified indica rice attains iron (Fe) and zinc (Zn) nutrition dietary

targets in the field.” PARRFI stands for Philippine Agriculture and Resources Research Foundation, Inc. On the other hand, the Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau (ERDB) bagged the F.O. Tesoro Technology Transfer Award for the “ERDB Hi-Q VAM1 Technology.”

SEARCA also participated in the Wonderama exhibition, which featured urban, marine, agriculture, and environment-related S&T exhibits on 2-4 August 2017.

As he closed SyenSaya 2017, Dr. Alexander R. Madrigal, DOST-CALABARZON Executive Director, indicated that among the programs being lined up for next year's celebration of SyenSaya

is the LBSC “science ecotourism,” and that it will highlight, as one of the major destinations, the Southeast Asian AgriMuseum and Learning Center to be built by SEARCA. (LLDDomingo)



SEARCA's display materials at the Wonderama were part of the Agriculture Cluster exhibition.



Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, welcomes the guests to the SyenSaya R&D Awarding and Closing Ceremonies.

Agri transformation, market integration project launched in Phl



Participants of ATMI-Philippines Inception Workshop with Dr. Saguiguit (seated, sixth from right) and DA Assistant Secretary Leandro Gazmin on his left and NEDA Assistant Secretary Mercedita A. Sombilla on his right. Also in the photo are resource persons, SEARCA officers, and members of the workshop secretariat.

SEARCA and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) launched the “Agricultural Transformation and Market Integration in the ASEAN Region: Responding to Food Security and Inclusiveness Concerns (ATMI-ASEAN)” project in the Philippines on 11 August 2017.

Funded by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the project covers four other countries, namely: Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Vietnam.

The project was launched at the inception workshop hosted by SEARCA in partnership with the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), and jointly organized with the Philippine Government’s Department of Agriculture (DA) and Department of Trade and Industry (DTI).

“The ATMI-ASEAN project aligns well with SEARCA’s thrust to promote regional integration and cooperation towards inclusive and sustainable agricultural and rural development (ISARD), which is the centerpiece of SEARCA’s current five-year development agenda,” said Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, at the start of the workshop..

He added that the project’s goal is to come up with institutional and policy reforms that will “ensure competitive participation and greater benefits for smallholder farmers in the regional agricultural and food markets.”

Meanwhile, Dr. Fabrizio Bresciani, IFAD Regional Economist for Asia and the Pacific, said IFAD is interested in understanding and improving the state of smallholder farming vis-

à-vis the agricultural transformation and market integration set into high gear by the ongoing ASEAN integration.

Forty-eight participants represented DA; DTI; Board of Investments (BOI); Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR); Philippine Rural Development Program (PRDP); Philippine Council for Agriculture and Fisheries (PCAF); National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA); Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCAARRD); Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA); University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB); International Rice Research Institute (IRRI); Philippine Compact Development Team-Millennium Challenge Corporation (CDT-MCC); Nexus Agribusiness Solutions; Asian Farmers’ Association for Sustainable Rural Development (AFA); and Asian Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Asia (AsiaDHRA).

The workshop enabled the participants to gain a good understanding of structural transformation and market integration as these relate to

Agri transformation/ to page 12



Philippine Agriculture Undersecretary Evelyn Laviña delivers the keynote message of Secretary Emmanuel Piñol.



Participants work on the action plan focused on agricultural transformation, market integration, trade, and value chains.