



New Isabela FMRs boost agri productivity, ease transport woes



Dairy Road. A kuliglig (modified hand tractor) passes through the Barangay Manano section of the 9.17-kilometer Olango–Siempre Viva–Trinidad–Manano farm-to-market road (FMR) in Mallig, Isabela. Situated in the Isabela dairy zone, the P62.45 million-worth rehabilitation and concreting of the FMR funded under the Department of Agriculture's Philippine Rural Development Project (DA-PRDP) is seen to primarily support the production of dairy, as well as other commodities such as rice, corn, cassava and sugarcane.

Two new farm-to-market road (FMR) subprojects under the Department of Agriculture's Philippine Rural Development Project (DA-PRDP) have improved agricultural productivity and provided ease of travel to residents in Mallig, Cabagan and Tumauni towns in Isabela.

According to Arnold Nolasco, a farmer from Barangay Manano in Mallig, it used to be very difficult for them to pass through the Olango–Siempre Viva–Trinidad–Manano FMR especially during rainy days when vehicles would get stuck in mud. But they had to endure the hardship as they had no other choice.

"However difficult and long the travel was—about 30 minutes—we had to bear it. [But] now that the road is paved, it only takes us 10 minutes to reach Trinidad and Siempre Viva (neighboring barangays)."

Under the PRDP, the whole 9.17-kilometer stretch of the Olango–Siempre Viva–Trinidad–Manano FMR was concreted, providing better transportation infrastructure to the immediate villages covered by the road influence area. Motorists also use the FMR as shortcut way from Quezon to Delfin Albano municipalities.

Completed with a budget of

P62.45 million, the FMR benefits about 1,900 households or 8,520 individuals.

On the other hand, the P40.20 million-worth Magassi–Union–Camasi FMR that covers parts of Cabagan and Tumauni municipalities benefits about 1,140 households or 5,540 individuals.

As with the FMR in Mallig town, the 4.93-kilometer road traverses through vast pasturelands—being part of the Isabela dairy industry zones—and tracts of land planted with rice, corn, cassava and some vegetables.

Read more on p.3 

PRDP subproject advances coffee farmers' livelihood and production method

Kalinga coffee farmers now feel more driven to boost their production as they await the release of funding assistance from the Department of Agriculture's Philippine Rural Development Project (DA-PRDP).

The P14.8-million funding assistance intended for the Kalinga Integrated Coffee Processing and Marketing Enterprise subproject is expected to improve the production of coffee beans in the this part of the Cordillera highlands. The enterprise's business plan has been undergoing few tweaks with the PRDP's assistance pending full-scale subproject implementation.

According to Maximo Wallis, chair of the Dupligan Farmers Multipurpose Cooperative (DUFAMCO), the lead proponent group of the subproject, with financial and technical support from the DA and improved production methods, the proponent is expecting better buying price.

Wallis said that coffee farmers in the province currently sell their dried, unsorted green coffee beans (the industry name for raw, unroasted coffee

beans) to local buyers or traders who dictate the price. Traders in Tabuk City, for instance, buy a kilogram of green coffee beans from farmers at only P80.

Under the proposed enterprise, green coffee beans will be sold by farmers to the cooperative at P83 and P86.85 per kilogram, for dry-processed and modified dry-processed beans, respectively. Meanwhile, wet-processed beans will be sold at P92.50 per kilogram.

Wet processing is a relatively new method in which the processor removes the four layers of coating around the bean, resulting to a fruitier flavor.

The process involves submerging the berries in water. Once a berry floats, it is rejected. It is then sorted and cleaned using a machine to remove the pulp, and then dried.

The drying process is simpler which involves naturally drying the cherries while the beans and all its layers are still intact. For this, the cherries need to be evenly dried for four weeks.

After processing, it may be sold to the trading center at P93 (dried) P105 (modified) and P115 (wet) per kilo. Expected institutional wholesale buyers include the Philippine Coffee Board, Philippine Coffee Alliance, Holsum Food Products and Nestlé.

To date, members can produce 450 metric tons of fresh beans annually, but according to Wallis, the funding will definitely encourage the members to improve the quality and volume of production.

He added that several of his 626-strong members—majority of whom are plantation owners now—are already planting seedlings to increase the volume of production.

"Our members get seedlings from the provincial offices of the DA and Department of Environment and Natural Resources," Wallis said.

The coffee enterprise will be managed as a cooperative where dividends and patronage refunds will be distributed among the members. Part of the expected fund will be used to construct a trading post, while bulk of the budget will be used to finance the



Kalinga Coffee. Locals dry coffee cherries on a pavement in Tanudan, Kalinga for processing. The Department of Agriculture's Philippine Rural Development Project (DA-PRDP) has assisted the coffee growers and processors in the province through the Kalinga Integrated Coffee Processing and Marketing Enterprise, a P14.8 million-worth subproject that is expected to give a boost to the coffee industry in this part of the Cordilleras.

New Isabela FMRs... (from page 1)

With the improvements, additional agricultural production areas are also now being developed along the new roads, according to residents.

Hauling cost savings

In a recent rapid appraisal of emerging benefits conducted by the PRDP, it was found out the the new roads have encouraged traders to go directly to the production areas to haul the farmers' products.

This translates to hauling cost savings, hence, additional income to farmers as they can now keep or expend on other purposes the money that should have otherwise been spent on hiring vehicles and laborers to transport their produce.

Farmer Rosalina Agonias, also from Barangay Manano in Mallig town, said that before, only kuliglig could pass through their road.

"Big trucks can now drive here to haul our products. Before, they wouldn't go here. We would be the ones bringing

our products to the buying stations," Agonias added.

With traders picking up their products, transport losses have also been reduced, farmers from both FMR subprojects shared.

Easier transport

The benefits of the new roads are not only limited to improving agricultural productivity.

Sally Espiritu of Camasi village in Tumauni said that the concreting of the road has made commuting to and from the market easier for them.

"Before, we even had to push three wheels (remodeled hand tractors) at times because of the poor road condition," Espiritu recalled.

Her neighbor, Margarita Bautista said that before, it would take them an hour to reach the market.

"With the paved road, we can now reach the town proper in 30 minutes. [Likewise] it's now easier to bring the sick to the hospital and more comfortable for students to reach school," Bautista said. *(Jan P. Dacumos, NPCO InfoACE Unit)* ■

PRDP subproject advances... (from page 2)

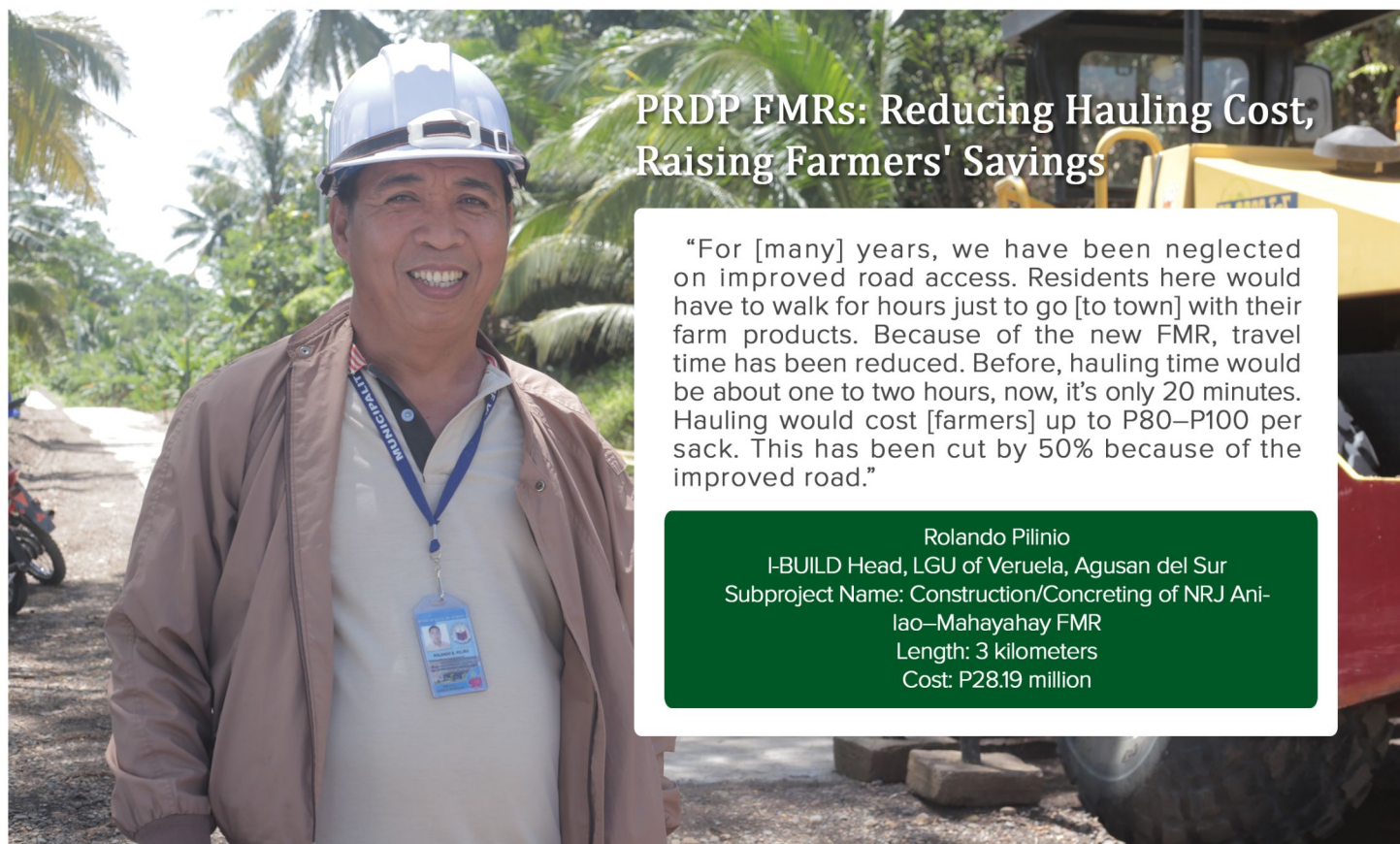
cost of production of their regular and affiliate members.

Once fully operational, the enterprise is expected to help spur coffee production as a major economic activity in the province.

According to Domingo Bakilan, the province's chief agriculturist, Kalinga was considered a top producer of coffee in the country from the 1970s to the 1980s. Through the years, it has been overtaken by other provinces and currently ranks seventh nationwide.

Bakilan, who also serves as the Provincial Project Management and Implementation Unit Head of the PRDP, added that coffee shops in the province have started to boom with the growing popularity of coffee drinking even among the younger generation.

"This opens up more opportunity and will definitely help generate income for the local farmers," he said. *(Alladin S. Diega, DA-PRDP NPCO InfoACE Unit)* ■



PRDP FMRs: Reducing Hauling Cost, Raising Farmers' Savings

"For [many] years, we have been neglected on improved road access. Residents here would have to walk for hours just to go [to town] with their farm products. Because of the new FMR, travel time has been reduced. Before, hauling time would be about one to two hours, now, it's only 20 minutes. Hauling would cost [farmers] up to P80–P100 per sack. This has been cut by 50% because of the improved road."

Rolando Pilinio
I-BUILD Head, LGU of Veruela, Agusan del Sur
Subproject Name: Construction/Concreting of NRJ Anilao–Mahayahay FMR
Length: 3 kilometers
Cost: P28.19 million

NEWS BRIEFS

LUZON A (North Luzon)

Ilocos Region approves 55 enterprise development sub-projects

The Regional Project Advisory Board (RPAB) in Region 1 has recently approved five regular enterprise and 50 micro-enterprise development subprojects (formerly small livelihood projects or SLPs) under the PRDP's I-REAP Component.

Through the facilitation of the Department of Agrarian Reform's regional office, the micro-enterprises were proposed by farmer groups who are agrarian reform beneficiaries. Excluding equities from proponent groups, the RPAB-approved micro-enterprises have an aggregate cost of P50 million.

Meanwhile, the regular enterprise subprojects, or those that exceed P1 million in total worth of investment, have a total project cost of about P37 million, also excluding PG equity. (RPCO 1 InfoACE Unit)

LUZON B (South Luzon)

Bicol gabi production gets renewed interest from industry players

Various industry players from the

Bicol Region have recently agreed to take on gabi (taro) as a champion commodity, after an intensive focus group discussion organized by the PRDP's I-PLAN Component.

After a series of discussions organized by I-PLAN Component, industry players and other stakeholders including farmers agreed to identify the difficulties and opportunities, as well as the interventions to produce sufficient and export-quality products made from gabi, an important traditional crop of Bicol. (Michelle Angela G. Alfigura, DA-PRDP RPCO 5 InfoACE Unit)

VISAYAS

Region 8 gets bulk of PRDP aid for enterprise devt in Visayas

Due to typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan), Region 8 needs the most assistance most among the Visayan regions, hence the recent approval of various enterprise development interventions by the PRDP.

Of the 105 enterprise development subprojects lined up in the Visayas cluster, 47 are from Region 8, according to Engr. Jose Albert Barrogo, PRDP's Deputy Project Director for Visayas. Of the 47 subprojects, 44 are already approved with a funding allocation of P88 million, while the remaining three are on the pipeline.

Included in the pipelined (Regular I-REAP) subprojects are the coco-geonets,

banana (cardaba), and coconut production and enhanced production thru intercropping of corn and soybeans. (Rodel G. Macapañas, RPCO 8 InfoACE Unit)

MINDANAO

Road eases plight of fisherfolk in Maguindanao town

For her to sell the fish-catch of her husband in the public market, Aida Gampong has to walk close to a kilometer of uphill and narrow dirt road before reaching the highway. This is where public transport ply the route to the town's market.

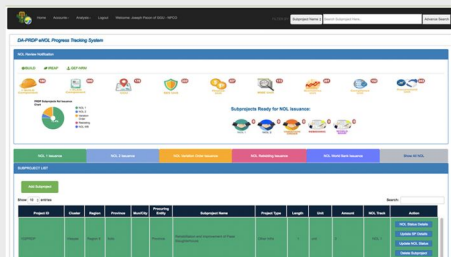
"An hour or so of long walk is a burden and it had remained that way for many years before the road was concreted," said the 32-year old mother of four.

"I usually carry a pail of at least 5 kilos of Danggit (rabbitfish) and Gisaw (mullet) because there was no means of transportation from our place to the highway," she added.

But things changed when the P25.37 million-worth concreting of the 2.55-kilometer Making-Kalutan FMR was funded by the PRDP.

"The PRDP fund has been a big help to the local government because we were able to save a big amount for the rehabilitation of the road which now serves the fishing village of Barangay Making," Parang Mayor Ibrahim Ibay said. (Sherwin B. Manual, PSO Mindanao InfoACE Unit)

inFOCUS THIS MONTH



eNOL Review and Progress Tracking Online System

The eNOL is an online system that will serve as a virtual venue for monitoring

and tracking of issuance of No Objection Letter (NOL) and the status of review per component/unit.

With the online system in place, the PRDP's components and units will be able to facilitate subproject review—anywhere and anytime as long as the reviewers are connected to the internet—and subsequently generate real-time updates.

The virtual system will accrue savings to the project as it facilitates review even without organizing joint review activities which entails costs such as travel and hotel accommodation.

Moreover, the system will automatically organize reports and simple analysis for updating to the management and interested stakeholders.

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