



FMR provides convenience to students, farmers, fishers



A fisherfolk delivers his catch on a motorcycle along the Bukang Liwayway-Makandring farm-to-market road. (Photo by Bernadeth Respicio, DA-PRDP MIMAROPA RPCO InfoACE Unit)

“Marami pong salamat. Kung hindi po dahil sa kanila [Project implementers], mahihirapan po kaming maglakad pauwi at papunta ng eskwela (Thank you so much. If it’s not because of them [the Project implementers], it would be difficult for us to walk home and to go to school),” Krystelle Fabrigas, a Grade 10 student of Langogan National High School, expressed her gratitude to the Philippine Rural Development Project (PRDP).

Fabrigas is one of the students who benefit from the PRDP-funded farm-to-market road (FMR) subproject in Brgy. Langogan, Puerto Princesa City.

Before the construction

of the eight-kilometer Bukang Liwayway to Makandring FMR, students from far-flung areas of Brgy. Langogan used to walk for more than an hour on a rough and dusty road. Their situation is more difficult during rainy season when the road is slippery and muddy.

According to Fabrigas, she and her fellow students tend to be late or absent during their first and second subjects in the morning because of the poor road. They arrive at school with dirty clothes, shoes, and bags. Their fare now is P10 going to school unlike before where they have to pay P25–P30 per head in a jam-packed motorcycle.

With the completed FMR, the students no longer have to suffer like they used to. Fabrigas said that they are now more inspired to go to school, because they can now travel faster and safer. “Mas lalo po akong natuwa tsaka mas lalo ko pong inigihan iyong pag-aaral ko dahil po ayos na po iyong kalsada, wala na pong dahilan kami para lumiban (I’m even more excited and I am working harder on my studies, because the road is better now and no longer a reason to miss school),” Fabrigas shared.

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Climate smart mini-greenhouses for year-long strawberry production



“During the Strawberry Festival in La Trinidad, our theme song is ‘Strawberry Fields Forever’ by the Beatles, because now we can grow strawberry anytime of the year.”

This was the exciting news of La Trinidad Municipal Agriculturist Felicitas Ticbaen to the team who visited the province of Benguet to document the PRDP subproject.

She added that gone are the days when farmers would use the bamboo tunnels in growing strawberries.

“Since the technology cannot withstand strong winds, rains and typhoons, the plants are

easily destroyed especially when the valleys are flooded.” Ticbaen said.

With the assistance coming from the PRDP especially the provision of steel type mini-greenhouses, we have a continuous production of strawberries because the plants are protected during rainy season and during typhoons. Now farmers can enjoy a whole year production.

According to Jumelyn Buya, president of the Federation of La Trinidad Valley Farmers-Irrigators’ Association (FLaTVIA), “with PRDP interventions, close to 600 farmer-members of the

association can sustain production and supply fresh strawberries twelve months a year.”

Local and international tourists can enjoy picking strawberries for themselves. There will also be a steady supply of fresh strawberries for the processors of jam, candies, cakes and others. This will help La Trinidad become an agri-tourism hub, Buya added.

FLaTVIA is the beneficiary of the one million pesos Strawberry Production Under Tunnel Mini-Greenhouse project under PRDP. *(Photo and Article by Kathrino V. Resurreccion, NPCO InfoACE Unit)* ■



FMR provides convenience...(from page 1)

Meanwhile, according to Normie dela Cruz, a cashew farmer from Purok Bagong Lipunan in Brgy. Langogan, she can now expect a bigger income. Because of the FMR, farmers like her can transport their cashew products and other produce directly to the wholesalers rather than wait for buyers who deduct P5 to P10 per kilogram. She also mentioned that the road reduced the hauling cost and cut their travel time, thereby minimizing spoilage. Also, fishers can deliver

their catch still fresh to the market.

In addition to the convenient transportation of goods, with the FMR subproject, the farmers are also motivated to plant more to increase their production and income. Most of them have already built concrete houses and acquired vehicles.

“Noong hindi pa ito na kokonkreto, alam niyo ’yong mga bahay diyan hindi pa ganyan. Ang gaganda na ng mga bahay dito, left and right ng kalsada, tapos may

mga tindahan at hardware na. Ang laki talaga ng impact nito sa mga tao (Before this was concreted, the houses here do not look like that. The houses at each side of the road here now look better, and there are stores and hardware shops that are already built. This really had a great impact to the people),” Engr. Leonida Kho, Project Engineer of the Puerto Princesa City Project Management Implementation Unit (CPMIU) shared. (Bernadeth Respicio, DA-PRDP MIMAROPA RPCO InfoACE Unit) ■

PRDP completes first Agri Tramline in Ilocos Sur



The P4.6M worth tramline is now being enjoyed by the farmers in Cervantes, Ilocos Sur as the DA-Philippine Rural Development Project (PRDP) has completed the construction of the Namita Agricultural Tramline.

The tramline is proposed by the Municipality of Cervantes to provide a safe, cheap, and fast alternative transport system of farm products and agricultural inputs from the mountainous sitios of Namita, Bulala, and Nansusua to the nearest road network.

Located at Barangay Malaya, the tramline has a total length of 472 lineal meters and will serve 34.55 hectares of upland agricultural land.

Before the tramline, farmers from Sitio Namita, Bulala, and Nansusua manually haul their produce from the fields to the nearest access roads. They walk 30 minutes from the nearest area of production (or one hour from the farthest area of production) to the national road, carrying the sack of their products on their backs. From the national road, it takes them 10-15 minute travel by land to the market. Thus, commodities are prone to spoilage and damage.

Mr. Felix Gumpac, resident of Brgy. Malaya and beneficiary of the tramline said, “We only transport products up to what our backs can carry and plant

only what we can carry manually from our farm land to the nearest access road. Why would we plant one hectare of land with rice if we cannot carry everything to bring to the market?”

He added, “During rainy season, manually hauling our products is really difficult. We pay people to carry our rice produce Php 60 per sack from the farthest farm lands. The price gets cheaper as the distance gets nearer.”

For the farmers, the completion of the tramline is a long awaited answer to their fervent prayers. (Dessa U. Estrada and Vida V. Cacal, RPCO 1 InfoACE Unit) ■

North Luzon

Mechanized farming, farmers' dream come true

From manual farming, farmers in Castillejos, Zambales now engage in farm mechanization at low cost through enterprise support from the Department of Agriculture's Philippine Rural Development Project (DA-PRDP).

The Nagbayan FFS Association is a cooperative with 31 members who are mostly rice and sweet potato producers. With the damages brought about by typhoons and natural calamities, the group proposed for farm equipment to help them recover from incurred losses.

In cooperation with the local government unit and Project offices, a Mini Four Wheel Drive Tractor with implements were awarded with a total enterprise cost of P880,000 – the first tractor ever received by the association.

"We used to rent tractors from private associations at P1,400 per hour. It was expensive but we still availed of their services because we really needed them," recalled Marcelino Alterado, chairman of Nagbayan FFS.

Farmers mostly rented from private groups because the existing tractor in the municipality cannot service the whole Castillejos, and it takes them almost a week before the request gets approved, according to Alterado.

He added, "When we received this tractor, it was truly a great help and relief for the cooperative and to farmers, members or non-members. Our objective here is to help not only our members, but also those who need tractor services at low costs." (*Kayla Arceo, PSO InfoACE*)

South Luzon

Albay's dairy cattle investment plan to push economic growth, reduce child malnutrition

LEGAZPI CITY, ALBAY – Assisted by Philippine Rural Development Project-Bicol (PRDP-Bicol) Planning Specialist Mary Ann Cuya, the Provincial Project Management and Implementation Unit (PPMIU)-Albay, local and national level planning (I-PLAN) team updated their Provincial Commodity Investment Plan (PCIP) based on the value chain analysis for dairy cattle.

According to PPMIU-Albay I-PLAN Engr. Percival de Villa, investing on the dairy cattle industry in the province seeks to solve the prevalence of malnutrition among children in the region. The value chain analysis for dairy cattle shows that in 2015, 8.6 percent of children aged 5 to 10 years old in Bicol are overweight or obese, 8.4 percent are wasting, 31.1 percent are stunted, while 31.2 percent are undernourished.

"Pag may nagpo-produce dito ng milk, mas magiging affordable siya (Milk will be more affordable if we produce it here)," said de Villa.

Updating the PCIP for dairy cattle will also push economic growth as 188,282 hectares of grasslands in Bicol are suitable for dairy farming. De Villa added that since Albay is a tourist area, value-added products from dairy cattle will expand the opportunities for farmers and processors in addition to pili, abaca and sweet potato products.

The PCIP aims to address the key gaps and constraints identified in the value chain analysis for dairy cattle in the province including insufficient quality and affordable breed of dairy cattle, inadequate developed pasture areas, and animal mortality because of natural calamities. (*Annielyn L. Baleza, DA-PRDP RPCO V InfoACE Unit*)

Visayas

Alegria potable water system revives idle farm lands

"I will go back to farming." This was the strong statement of Leonila Glova of Alegria, Cebu following the ongoing implementation of the potable water system (PWS) in the area by the Department of

Agriculture's Philippine Rural Development Project (DA-PRDP).

Through the PWS project, farmers like Glova are encouraged to utilize what used to be their idle lands.

"It's been three years now since I stopped farming because going to the water source is a challenge. I had to carry many containers so I decided to stop farming," Glova shared.

She eventually changed her mind and wants to go back to farming after seeing hopes that clean water will soon be made available in their area.

"If there is one thing I'm sure of doing right now, is to go back to farming, planting onions, chili, or even chayote. Whether the terrain is sloping or rocky, I know we can store water through the use of plastic drums or use hose to water the plants," said Glova.

Alegria farmers vowed to till back their idle farmlands now that the PWS is being implemented. It is an answer to an earnest request. In fact, residents voluntarily donated parcel of their lands for the stationing of tap stands and reservoir to lessen the struggle of fetching water to and from the water source.

The local government of Alegria pushed for the Rehabilitation of the PWS with total replacement of 50-year-old dilapidated pipes and construction of reservoirs to ensure potable water to curb the outbreak of typhoid fever in the area and this will revive the once active farming activities of the farmers. (*Bexmae Jumao-as, RPCO 7 InfoACE*)

Mindanao

Locals form team to monitor project implementation

Tampilisan, Zamboanga del Norte – School teachers and barangay officials here have formed a team to closely monitor the implementation of farm-to-market road.

Some 60 participants gathered during the four-day Citizen Monitoring Team (CMT) training conducted by the Project's Mindanao Project Support Office to learn the technical aspect of road construction and geotagging technology.

"Monitoring is a very important activity to ensure our project implementation. As stakeholder and project beneficiaries, your role in monitoring on the ground level is vital in achieving a well-implemented project," said National Project Coordination Office Deputy Project Director Engr. Cirilo N. Namoc.

CMT is a strategy that complements the subprojects' robust monitoring and evaluation. The Monitoring Team is organized at the community level to engage the community that benefits from the project. For this team, they will be monitoring the rehabilitation of Poblacion-Farmington-Galingon-Balacbaan-Cabong-Tilubog farm-to-market road measuring 13.82 kilometers with a total budget of P188.17 million.

"Hopefully, they will be able to institutionalize the monitoring activities of subproject by having their own community-based monitoring and evaluation," said PSO Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Unit Head Joseph D. Rico who leads the training team. (*Joy M. Montecalvo/PSO Mindanao*)

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