

Lady Rice Coffee Manufacturer is Pondo sa Sipag, Puhunan sa Tiyaga Winner

by Marivic M. Alimbuyuguen

“I see myself in you”. These were the very words of Senate President Manuel B. Villar during the Pondo sa Sipag, Puhunan Sa Tiyaga Awards Night held at the Laurel House, Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong City last August 2, 2008. The Senator who is a very successful businessman, even before he entered politics said, “Like you, I had practically nothing when I started my business of building “romantic houses,” referring to space saving houses designed for newly weds and for small families. Since these houses are small, they are very affordable and within the means of the average Filipino family. He added that “the best entrepreneurs are those who have nothing, for they have also nothing to lose. What our government needs now are hard-working entrepreneurs with a lot of determination to succeed and creativity to know their market.”

Sarah Conception Dabucon is one of the two in Region 1, out of the 16 awardees nationwide. Sarah was nominated by MMSU Extension Directorate to the search with her Scufynd Food Processing, specifically, rice coffee as her enterprise. The Pondo sa Sipag-Puhunan sa Tiyaga is a tulong-pondo, tulong-puhunan for micro and small enterprises that exemplify sipag at tiyaga. This is a project launched by the Nationalista Party in its Centennial Anniversary celebration this year.

What is the story behind Sarah's rice coffee business? With only PhP 5,000.00 start up capital in 2002, Sarah started her rice coffee production using a traditional cooking vat and grinder. She established her production area right in the backyard of her parent's family house in Sinamar, Banna, Ilocos Norte. Seeing Sarah's determination and commitment of making her business prosper and succeed, the Extension Service Technology Promotion Utilization Department (ESTPUD), now the Extension Directorate, prepared a proposal to the Department of Science and Technology- Technology Application and Promotion Institute (DOST-TAPI) through its Science and Technology Assistance Mechanism-

Municipal Science and Technology Advisory Program (STEAM-MSTAP) on Rural Enterprise Development of Commercial Rice Beverage Manufacturing and Marketing. This program aims to assist rural micro enterprises by providing financial assistance for the improvement of their business equipment and facilities.

As a recipient of a soft loan amounting to PhP 234,500.00 from the STEAM-MSTAP, Sarah was able to purchase mechanical roaster, grinder, stainless preparation table, containers, display cabinets and other equipment necessary for her rice coffee production. Also, she had improved her packaging and labeling which included nutritional analysis and bar code. Moreover, she had refurbished her production plant which was her counterpart.

How did the business prosper into what it is now? Like any beginner in business, Sarah was never spared from problems and challenges. First, she had to find a market for her rice coffee as this is a novelty food item in the Ilocos. Second, she had to compete with multi-national corporations that had penetrated even the remotest area in the country with their commercial coffee products. Third, she had to establish networks to assist her in her entrepreneurial needs.

From Sarah's production of few bottles of rice coffee in 2002, this increased to a volume of 4,608 kg or 15,360 bottles @ 300



Upper photo: The awardee together with Senate President, Manny Villar during the awarding ceremony. Lower photo: The 16 Sipag at Tiyaga awardees.

gm per bottle giving her a net income of PhP308,312 for 2007. To realize this income, she had expanded her outlets in government agencies such as MMSU, DTI, DepEd, OPAG and other stores in and outside the province like 5 Sisters, Wide West, Enricos, Johnson, Marshas and Tiendesitas of Robinson. Sarah proudly claims, “Nakadanon abroad daytoy rice coffee kon ma'am. Adu ti gumatgatang kaniak tapno pasalubong da kadagiti

- lakebed, marshland, shoreline or riverbank.
 - The farm must have effective irrigation and drainage system.
 - The farm must be accessible to regular means of transportation.
 - The farm must be suitable for production in accordance with recommended POT, e.g. right zinc content for rice, and not more than 15 degrees slope for corn, except for those farmland with contour structure using the Sloping Agricultural Land Technology (SALT).
- g. Application for Insurance
- For borrowing farmers, the Application for Production Loan (APL) serves as the application for crop insurance.
 - For self financed farmers, the Application for Crop Insurance is processed and approved by authorized underwriting agent or PCIC Regional Office.
- h. Attachment of the Application for Crop Insurance
- For Borrowing Farmers
- a. List of Borrowers (GCIS)
 - b. Application for Product Loan (APL) for Individual Farmers
 - c. Location Sketch Plan (LSP)
 - d. Consolidated Farm Plan and Budget (FPB) for Group Crop Insurance and FPB for individual farmers.
 - e. Certificate of Insurance Cover (CIC)
- For Self-Financed Farmers
- a. Application for Crop Insurance (ACI)
 - b. Farm Plan and Budget
 - c. Location Sketch Plan (LSP)
 - d. Certificate of Insurance Cover (CIC)
- i. Risk Insured Against
- Natural Disaster
- Typhoon, Flood, Drought, Earthquake, Volcanic Eruptions.
- Multi Risks
- All Natural Disasters
 - Pests
 - Rice
 - Rats
 - Locusts
 - Amyworks/cutworms
 - Stemborer
 - Black Bugs
 - Brown Planthopper
 - Hopperburn
 - Diseases
 - Tungro
 - Rice/neckrot
 - Grassy stunt
 - Bacterial Leaf Blight
 - Sheath Blight
- j. Excluded Risks
- Fire from whatever cause
 - Theft and robbery, any related civil or military disturbances including nuclear reaction or radioactive contamination whether controlled or uncontrolled.
 - Any measure resorted to by the government in the larger interest of the public.
 - Avoidable risks emanating from or due to neglect of the assured/non-compliance with accepted farm management practices by the assured or person authorized by him to work and care for the insured crop.
 - Strong wind and heavy rain not induced by typhoon.
 - Those occurring:
 - a. Prior to the effectivity of insurance
 - b. Prior to the emergence of the first leaf of corn or seed growth (coleoptile) for rice if directly seeded
 - c. Beyond the scheduled date of harvest as appearing in the CIC unless reported to PCIC at least ten (10) calendar days before actual harvest.
 - d. After harvest.
- k. Category of Loss
- No Loss (Loss is below 10%)
 - Partial Loss (Loss is between 11% to 89%)
 - Total Loss (Loss is 90% and above)
- l. Notice of Loss
- The notice of Loss must be filed within ten (10) calendar days which shall reckon from the occurrence of loss, provided that if loss is caused by a risk insured against where the effect of damage is gradual or progressive, said notice of loss shall be filed upon discovery of the loss but no case shall it be later than twenty (20) calendar days before the scheduled date of harvest.
- m. Claims Inspection and Verification
- Inspection and Verification of Claims shall be done by a Team of Adjusters designated for the purpose.
- n. Claims Processing Response Time
- Payment of indemnity shall be made as soon as possible or within a period of thirty (30) working days after the submission of all the required supporting papers.

Crop damages covered by crop insurance



Extension staff measuring farmers' fields.

Extensionist is published by the
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kakabagianda abroad.” (My rice coffee had also penetrated the foreign market as the product is a favorite pasalubong of Balikbayans to their relatives abroad”).

Through the Information Communication Technology (ICT) project of the Applied Communication Section of the Extension Directorate, Sarah’s rice coffee is exhibited and sold in various Town Fiestas and Trade Fairs. Where the ICT goes, Sarah’s rice coffee goes, too. As far as her linkages are concerned, Sarah’s good reputation of being able to pay her obligations to DOST and being an MMSU-CAF alumna, had resulted to her becoming one of the recipients of the DOST’s Small Enterprise Upgrading Program (SET-UP). The SET-UP assists local micro, small and medium enterprises improve their productivity and competitiveness through the infusion of new technologies and technical interventions.

What makes a successful woman entrepreneur? Does one need to have the degrees in business and management to be one? During the awarding, Prof. Prospero “Popoy” De Vera of UP Diliman and Chair of the Search Committee has this to say “we are awarding Filipino entrepreneurs who possess exceptional entrepreneurial capabilities and skills, not necessarily learned in formal instructions but whose values and orientation in life had led them to where they are now.”

For Sarah, these are “*kinagaget, adu nga anus ken kinalaing a mangipampusuan – dagitoy ti sarukod ko a mangituntunda iti innak panagnegosyo ken panagbiag. Bulonan dagitoy a galad ti adu a kararag ken panagtalek iti Naparsua*” (Industry, perseverance and resourcefulness – these are my staff that guide me in my business and life. Together with these virtues is a lot of prayers and trust in the Lord). Being a mother and father, all

rolled into one to her three sons, is never an easy task. Despite of this, her perseverance has kept her afloat even in the most challenging times of her life which is to take care of her son with a congenital heart disease. As a parent, Sarah always hopes the best for her children. She knows that she can only achieve this by working hard and living life in simple sacrificial ways.

With all the blessings she has received, Sarah sees a brighter future for her rice coffee. From her prize of PhP 100,000.00, she plans to improve farther her product. In the future, Sarah hopes to see her rice coffee in tea bags blended with various herbal components for a more healthful drink.

Indeed, Sarah is a living example worth emulating by any woman, an entrepreneur and a graduate of agriculture. From all of us in the university, “Kudos and congratulations, Sarah!!!”

MMSU Non-Teaching...from page 6

hazard analysis for critical control point of food, managing the food services system and catering management.

Training for Drivers, Mechanics and Heavy Equipment Operators

Conducted on 23, 26 and 27 May 2008, the training was participated by 38 drivers, mechanics and heavy equipment operators. The topics included tips on driving, road courtesy and road signs; rules, policies and regulations on road signs and anti – carnapping; preventive maintenance, cost cutting measures and lubricants of vehicles; trouble shooting of vehicle; trouble shooting, and preventive maintenance of heavy equipment. To ensure quality outcome of the training, highly specialized resource speakers from the region were invited to share their expertise. Issues and problems were raised during the workshop and which were initially resolved during the presentation of the



workshop output.

Training for Security Staff

Two batches were conducted for this training. These were conducted on June 12 – 13 and July 24 – 25 2008 with seventy seven members of the security staff attending these trainings. Topics discussed were on legal issues confronting security personnel; traffic enforcement and management; courtesy, discipline, ethics and professional conduct of security staff; guarding system, use of firearms

and equipment and bomb detection; correspondence and marksmanship. Trainers came from the Land Transportation Office in Batac City, Philippine National Police in Batac and Laoag and the Department of Public Safety in Ilocos Norte. The marksmanship training was held at the El Vibora Firing Range in Batac City. In this module, the participants were encouraged to have an actual practice on shooting.

Search for Most Outstanding Magsasaka Siyentista in Region 1

Acosta is 2nd runner-up

Mercy R. Gaño

Nestor T. Acosta, MS of Bacarra FITS Center garnered 2nd runner up in the recently conducted search for most outstanding MS in region I. The competition was sponsored by the Ilocos Agriculture and Resources Research and Development Consortium (ILARRDEC) based at MMSU. Acosta, together with the other winners received their plaque of recognition and cash awards during the 20th Regional Symposium on R&D Highlights held on 12-13, August 2008 at MMSU, City of Batac, Ilocos Norte.

Who is M’g Nestor?

Nestor, as he is often called by his family, friends, relatives, and co farmers had contributed a lot to the development of the agricultural sector not only in his locality but also in nearby barangays and even in some towns in the province including Laoag City.

Nestor, who started having a family at 18 and also had a farming experience for eighteen years now, never thought that he would reap everything he has today together with his family after long years of sacrifice and hard work. Yes, Nestor is what he is today, all because of his dream to give the best for his family.

Nestor, who has a family of seven (with 5 children) is an epitome of a Cinderella story – from rags to riches. Nestor and his wife started as tenants tilling a 2,500m².



MS Farmer Nestor Acosta.

The family improved the productivity of their landholding by adopting modern and scientific methods of farming that Nestor acquired from various trainings he attended. With the small landholding that he had, he felt that his vision for his family will be slow to achieve, thus, he registered as a Mango Producer. Coupled with his patience and perseverance, together with the support of his wife and children, Nestor was able to

increase their landholding to 4.5 ha for rice production, 3.5, is owned by the family and the other is leased.

Farm Management

While the two children of Nestor have already their own families, they are still actively involved in farm activities and in marketing their farm

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Crop Insurance helps RSDP beneficiaries

Vynkristine S. Ibañez

To secure the rice crops of the farmer-beneficiaries of the Rice Seedstock Dispersal Project (RSDP) of the Extension Directorate, from various damages brought about by pest, diseases, and calamities like typhoon and drought during the whole duration of the rice growing period, these were covered by the Crop Insurance based in Pangasinan. This is now the fifth year that the crops are ensured to the Philippine Crop Insurance (PCIC).

Today, risks in the field are becoming more and more unpredictable. This is the very reason why the crop insurance had been made as a component technology of the RSDP. This is implemented in collaboration with the PCIC with regards to the indemnity of crops particularly on rice. The collaboration made MMSU as one of the Underwriters of PCIC in the province. As an underwriter, the university is responsible for the insurance of the agricultural projects of its cooperators/borrowers, prepare the documents required under the crop insurance and collect the corresponding farmer-premium share from its cooperators/borrowers based on the risk classification of the municipality where the project is located.

Through this initiative, the farmer-beneficiaries of the university on RSDP need not worry on crop losses in case their crops are damaged.

The crop insurance also covers the following:

a. Category of Farmer

The farmer could either be borrower or self-financed in his farming activities.

b. Type of cover

The program covers two types of risk namely, multiple risks and natural disaster. Multiple risks include identified major pest and diseases. Natural disaster, on the other hand, comprises typhoon, flood, drought, volcanic eruptions and earthquake.

c. Premium Rate is based on the Risk Classification per municipality:

- ✓ Low – Adams, Badoc, Burgos, Carasi, Dingras, Dumalneg, Nueva Era, Piddig, Pinili, and Pasuquin.
- ✓ Medium – Marcos, San Nicolas, and Solsona.
- ✓ High – Bacarra, Bangui, Batac, Currimao, Banna, Laoag City, Paoay, Pagudpud, Sarrat, and Vintar.

d. Period of Cover

Crop to Crop Season Basis

1. Wet Season (May 1 – October 31)
2. Dry Season (November 1 – April 30)

Duration of Insurance Cover

For rice - the duration of insurance from transplanting/direct seeding to harvesting

e. Amount of Cover

The amount of cover ranges from a minimum of P4,000.00 to a maximum of 14,000.00 for rice farmers, P20,000.00 to 24,000.00 for ordinary seed growers and P30,000.00 for hybrid rice producers. These amounts shall be the cost of production inputs including cost of labor thereof plus 20% thereof, to the portion of the value of the expected yield.

The insurance has also an overriding benefit which is the death assistance. An amount of P10,000.00 will be given at any cause of death except suicide.

f. Qualification and Eligibility Requirements

- Maximum allowed area per farmer is 7 hectares only
- The farm must not be a part of riverbed,

MMSU – SIFE TEAM is 3rd Runner Up in the 2008 SIFE National Competition

Bella C. Gervacio

Once again, the MMSU – Student in Free Enterprise (SIFE) Team brought home glory for MMSU after garnering 3rd place in this year's SIFE National Competition held at the Hotel Dusit Thani, Makati City on August 1 – 2, 2008. The competition was participated by twenty colleges and universities from all over the Philippines.

This is now the fourth time that MMSU participated in this annual SIFE Competition. In 2006, the MMSU – SIFE Team was the national champion and represented the Philippines in the SIFE World Cup in Paris, France. MMSU – SIFE Team made it to the semi – final round participated by 48 countries around the world. This was the highest award received by Philippine Team since it started to participate in the SIFE World Cup in 1997.

Other winners to the competition were San Beda SIFE Team as champion and will represent the Philippines in the SIFE World Cup in Singapore on October 1 – 3, 2008. The SIFE Team of Sultan Kudarat Polytechnic State College garnered 1st runner up while Divine World College, Calapan, Occidental Mindoro was 2nd runner up. As incentive to the top three teams including their faculty advisor, will be joining the Philippine delegation to the SIFE World as observers.

The MMSU – SIFE Team is composed of Greggy Martell C. Felipe, BS Accountancy IV; Ralph Emerson A. Agonoy, BS Biology II; Efren Jonicel D. Domingo, BS Education III; and James Patrick Acang, BS Computer Science IV. Dr. Marivic M. Alimbuyugen, Director, Extension Directorate, serves as the Executive Advisor and Ms. Bella C. Gervacio as the Faculty Advisor.



The MMSU-SIFE Team

SIFE is a global non-profit organization active in 48 countries and territories. It is funded by giant business corporations, entrepreneurs, and foundations including government agencies and individuals all over the world. The SIFE works in partnership with the business sector and higher education sectors. To date, a total of 300 university campuses in the Philippines have already established their own teams. The teams through the leadership of their faculty advisors developed community outreach projects that focused on Market Economics, Entrepreneurship, Personal Financial Success Skills and Business Ethics.



SIFE beneficiaries this year are from Paoay, Curimao, Pinili, Bangui, and the Cities of Batac and Laoag, Ilocos Norte. They composed of rural men and women who are interested to engage in bamboo processing. Various trainings on bamboo plantation and establishment and processing were conducted by the SIFERs. Entrepreneurial skills were taught to the beneficiaries for them to realize the value of these products and how these products can augment their family income. Activities conducted by the SIFERs were realized through the support of the MMSU Bamboo Development Project.

MMSU Non-Teaching Staff attends Capability Enhancement Trainings

Bella C. Gervacio

With the University's desire to improve the work capabilities of its personnel, series of capability enhancement trainings were conducted. These were participated by 134 staff composed of food services workers, drivers, mechanics, heavy equipment operators and security staff. The trainings were conducted in the months of April, May, June and July 2008 at the University Training Center.

The Capability Enhancement Training is an annual activity offered to non – teaching staff to equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary to upgrade their work capabilities. These trainings were spearheaded by the Extension Directorate in coordination with the Gender and Development Unit and the College of Business Economics and Accountancy. Part of the training package was the conduct of workshops to encourage the participants raise issues and problems in their respective work places including possible solutions to the issues/

problems. The outputs of the trainees were consolidated and were included in the training proceedings for submission to the office of the President.

Training for Food Service Workers

The training was conducted on 29 – 30 April 2008 at the MMSU-UTC. It was participated by 19 food service workers in the University. Two sets of modules were discussed during the training. These

include the general modules which were offered to all the training batches and the modules to enhance specialization of trainees. Resource speakers of the general modules were faculty of the CBEA while those specialization modules came from the Chowking, Batac; Palazzo de Laoag Hotel; and Rogines catering. Topics were on food safety management, maintenance of food service facilities, food safety awareness,

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products. Even his grandchildren help Nestor in his farming activities. Because of these, family relationship is strengthened as they continue helping each other.

Before becoming an MS, Nestor was already a model to his fellow farmers. He was a five time Regional Gawad Saka Awardee on High Value Crops and Integrated Farming. He is a consistent top mango producer of Ilocos Norte. He was also adjudged as Outstanding Mango Exporter in 1998. This had given him the chance to go to Hongkong to enrich his knowledge and enhance his skills in mango production for free.

Organic farming technologies has long been a practice of Nestor. He uses chicken manure for his rice crops which finds it very effective in increasing his farm production not only for rice but also for other crops, specially vegetables.

Nestor also practices Integrated Pest Management. Nestor has proven the benefit of synchronous planting in his rice field. The use of chicken manure has minimized the attacked of golden kuhol, the very problem of farmers in their rice fields. The use of insect traps hanged in his mango trees and some other areas which he observed are being attacked by insects is a strategy applied by Nestor.

Linkages Established

The 4 ha farm area leased by the family in growing various crops like fruit trees specially mango intercropped with vegetables had been developed through the assistance of various government and private organizations. These include the Department of Agriculture Region –I, the Provincial Government of Ilocos Norte, and the Local Government Unit of Bacarra, Ilocos Norte through the Municipal Agriculture Office. Other agencies assisting the Acosta family include ILARRDEC, MMSU, East-West Company, Agri-Harvest Company, A-Z

Marketing, AMWAY and the Chicken Manure Processor.

Nestor is actively involved in organizations in various capacities like the Fruits and Vegetable Growers in Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Norte Mango Growers Association, and Ilocos Norte Seed Growers Association.

Community Involvement

Nestor and his family had been actively involved in community development. From 2002-2007, Nestor had been elected as Barangay Kagawad in Brgy. Buyon, Bacarra, Ilocos Norte. During that time, Nestor was designated as the Chairperson for the Committee on Agriculture. One of his greatest accomplishments was the organization of the Pagrang-ayan Farmers' Association at Sitio Calautit, with 27 farmer-members. He was instrumental in the establishment of a mini dam that irrigates the 4-ha land which was unproductive. With the continued support of LGU of Bacarra, Nestor continued to share his blessings to other farmers.

Indeed, sharing is a virtue ingrained in Nestor. He unselfishly shares his knowledge and expertise to anyone. Recently, he assisted the development of a 1 ha farm in Brgy. Balatong, Laoag City owned by the Golden Bakery of Laoag. With the assistance of the City Agriculture Office of Laoag, the area had been planted to

various off-season vegetables. With the planting of various vegetables in the area, a farmer living in the same place saw the potential of the technologies applied. Mr. Dominador Guerrero who had been curious in the technologies he saw, he was encouraged to apply them and also seek the assistance of Nestor. Fortunate enough, the area of Mr. Guerrero was adjudged as Outstanding High Value Crops (HVC) farmer in Laoag City in 1997 sponsored by the City Agriculture Office.

He is also providing technical know-how to the Garganta family of the City of Batac, Ilocos Norte in improving their farm. At present, this is planted to various vegetables.

Further, Nestor is actively involved in all Mini Agro Industrial Trade Fairs during the Bacarra Annual Town Fiesta and Farmers' Festival.

He also became the president of the Barangay Agriculture and Fishery Council (BAFC) which spearheaded the animal dispersal project in their community; Vice President of the Pagrang-ayan Farmers' Association; President of the Fruits and Vegetables Growers Farmers Association, and Member of the Ilocos Norte Seed Growers Association and an accredited distributor of Certified Palay Seeds.

Nestor's family could not provide all the labor needed by their farm. The family has

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Mr. Acosta receiving the award during the 20th R&D Symposium on R&D Highlights sponsored by ILARRDEC.

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to hire laborers from the community to help them in their farming activities. Thus, he also provides additional source of income for the community.

Serving as a model in organic farming, Nestor had increased the awareness and knowledge of farmers on the benefits of the technology. As such, he had given the option for farmers to lessen their cost of production in their farm activities.

Status of the MS Farm

The Acosta farm was once a wasteland. With a lot of patience and sacrifices, the Acosta family transformed the area into a very productive farm land. Good farm management practices were administered by Nestor to make the area very productive, for his family and community as well. Now, the area supplies the needed fruits and vegetables of Bacarra and the whole province of Ilocos Norte.

Information and Technology Services

Mr. Nestor Acosta was appointed by the RRDCC of ILARRDEC in 2002 as one of the Magsasaka Siyentista. Since then, his farm served as demo farm on various off-season vegetables like tomato and squash. Aside from this, it is also a venue for demo farms of various seed companies like AZ and Amway.

He is a recognized farmer leader because of his commitment to showcase the technologies generated by the consortium and other companies providing him assistance which he believed are very effective in the development of his farm. For his mango, he practiced the use of flower inducers, foliar and soil fertilizer, and pruning.

His farm is continuously visited by farmers, government officials, students, private institutions, and other organizations all over the country.

Nestor is frequently tapped as resource person in various trainings conducted by the LGU of Bacarra and other agencies requesting his expertise considering his years of experience in farming. He also acted as consultant in various farm activities of several stakeholders. These include seminars on organic agriculture and organic vegetable production, among others.

Nestor's success in farming is not only measured by these accomplishments. More importantly, through farming he was able to economically improve his family's life as evidenced by his acquired land holdings, trucks and jeepneys, construction of house for his wife and children. These are proofs that farming is a profitable enterprise. But most of all, his desire to help unselfishly had impacted on the lives of other farmers and their families.

RECOGNITION/AWARDS

Citation/Award	Sponsoring Agency	Date/Activity
Outstanding Farmer Adopting Integrated Farming Systems Irrigated Lowland Category	DA-Diliman, Quezon City	1989-1990, Farmers' Fishermen Months Celebration
1991-1992 Regional Outstanding Farmer Adopting Integrated Farming, Irrigated Lowland Farming System	DA	May 29, 1992, Bacnotan, La Union
Special Citation, Awarding Ceremonies of the Gawad Saka for Agricultural Achievers, 2002	OPAG	2002
Certificate of Award, Ginintuang Masaganang Ani-High Value Commercial Crops Program with P150,000 for the establishment of a plant nursery	DA-I	August 2, 2002
2 nd Runner Up, 2004 Search for Most Outstanding MS in Region 1	ILARRDEC	August 11, 2004, 16 th ILARRDEC R&D Symposium
Most Outstanding MS in Region I	ILARRDEC	August 11, 2006, 18 th ILARRDEC R&D Highlights
Regional Outstanding Farm Family, Gawad Saka, 2003-2004	DA-I	May 20, 2004
Accreditation as Seed Grower	Bureau of Plant Industry, Manila	Jan. 22, 2004 – Jan. 21, 2007

Typhoon Karen hits MS Farms in Ilocos Norte

MMSU-assisted S&T based farms in Bacarra and San Nicolas, Ilocos Norte were hit by typhoon Karen when she visited the province on August 20, 2008.

Because of heavy rains and winds brought about by typhoon Karen, the farms of Mr. Nestor Acosta, MS of Bacarra, Ilocos Norte which were planted to organically grown vegetables like squash, bitter melon, and patola and assisted by Provincial Government of Ilocos Norte (PGIN), Ilocos Agriculture and Resources Research and Development Consortium (ILARRDEC), Philippine Council for Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCARRD) and Mariano Marcos State University (MMSU) were heavily damaged.

Trellises for bitter melon and patola collapsed resulting to the destruction of these crops. The farm is on its peak of fruit production. Despite of this, Acosta still hopes that the plants will recover.

On the other hand, Mr. Honorio de la Cruz, MS farmer in San Nicolas, Ilocos Norte presently assisted by the PGIN, ILARRDEC, PCARRD and MMSU was also affected by the crop damages brought about by typhoon Karen. His 2,000m² farm area planted to organic table tomato was heavily covered with garbage. However, with patience and strong will power to overcome the damage brought by the typhoon had his crops recovered and now he is starting to harvest fruits from his tomatoes. He hopes to fully recover as he continue to apply good management practices in his crop. A farmers' field day is scheduled on September 19, 2008 to showcase the various technology interventions in his farm.



Extent of crop damages in Bacarra S&T based farm



The S&T based farm in San Nicolas, Ilocos Norte recovering from the crop damage brought about by typhoon Karen

MMSU implements BIG project

Mercy R. Gaño

To help address malnutrition problem in poor and depressed areas in Region I, the Mariano Marcos State University in coordination with the other members of the Regional Development Council 1 such as the LGUs, DepEd, DA, DOST, ILARRDEC, DOH-NNC, DENR and SUCs, will implement the Bio Intensive Gardening (BIG) Project through the promotion and adoption of Bio – Intensive Home Gardening and Organic Agriculture.

Specifically, the BIG project aims to promote the massive adoption of intensive and organic home gardening to address malnutrition in poverty – stricken communities in the region; enhance capabilities of communities to address malnutrition problems through intensive and organic home gardening; extend assistance to women and school children to engage in intensive home gardening and organic agriculture as a source of additional income and source of nutritious food; support relevant technology and investment promotion of BIG/Organic Agriculture. and develop community – based and participatory adoption of the program.

What is Bio – Intensive Gardening?

- ✓ The Bio – Intensive approach is a biological or organic form of agriculture in which a small area is intensively cultivated, using natural ingredients to rebuild and maintain the soil's nutrients, moisture and productivity through nutrient cycling, diversified cropping, and deep – bed preparation on small – scale plots (200 – 500 ft²).
- ✓ Bio – intensive gardens contain a diverse range of indigenous crops which minimizes the opportunities for pest outbreaks and preserves indigenous seed varieties. The vegetables produced are chemical free and very healthy for human consumption. The use of household wastes (wood ash, egg shells, food leftovers and other materials that can be decomposed easily) helps to recycle valuable nutrients back into the farming system.

- ✓ The approach is less labor – intensive and this makes it affordable to the poorer farmers who normally lack capital. Establishing a bio – intensive garden close to the house makes it possible for the family to produce fresh vegetables all year round, improving the nutritional status of the family.
- ✓ The main target groups of the practice of bio - intensive gardening are housewives, farmers, agricultural science teachers in elementary schools and their pupils.

The Bio – Intensive Gardening Program in Region I.

The implementation of the nutrition program will adopt the Bio – intensive gardening and organic agriculture technologies. The program will be anchored in the Food for School program. Bio – intensive Gardening enhances a typical home garden in Ilocos Region which is premised on a high diversity of economically important plants per unit area, resulting in a unique combination of high levels of productivity, sustainability, and equitability. BIG has a greater diversity of production and usually produces a higher net income on a per unit area. The harvest is (a) more stable over time, (b) the system is resistant against pests and diseases, (c) organically produced or with minimum inputs required, and (d) has minimum soil erosion. More importantly, BIG is a highly valuable source of cheap and nutritious food (fruits, vegetables, rootcrops, livestock and poultry), wood and medicinal which are equitably shared among members of the household and neighborhood, thereby, enabling them to save on food expenses. Said program advocates and promotes the adoption of organic agriculture in backyard vegetable growing of every household.

Program Implementation Mechanism

- ✓ The effectiveness of the Bio – intensive gardening will be determined by the improvement in the nutrition status of school children in the selected pilot depressed barangays, monitoring and evaluation of BIG implementation as well as the nutritional status of school children in pilot communities and pilot public schools will be undertaken.
- ✓ The Bio – intensive gardening which will incorporate organic agriculture will be adopted in the complementary activities of the food for school program particularly in the school, home and food production. Pilot/Demo projects will be established in accredited farms and pilot schools per province.
- ✓ IEC on BIG promotion to include (a) seminar and skills development training on BIG in Public School, (b) production and distribution of technoguides and leaflets and (c) inclusion of BIG in subject lessons in elementary and high school.
- ✓ Distribution of Seeds, planting materials, biofertilizers, etc. in pilot schools, families and communities.
- ✓ The BIG project will be integrated to the implementation of the FITS project in Region I
- ✓ Conduct of BIG related research and development.

"A modest garden contains ,
for those who know how to look
and wait, more instruction
than a library"

Henri Frederic Amiel
Swiss philosopher and poet