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Photo: Sec. Emmanuel Piñol and Sec. Ramon Lopez inspect rice being sold at the Commonwealth Market after the launch of the new SRP and prescribed labeling of rice

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Mga rice dealer sasampolan 'pag lumabag sa SRP

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## NFA WARNS RICE TRADERS VS SRP VIOLATIONS

**T**RADERS caught selling rice at prices higher than the government's suggested retail price can lose their license, risk jail, and pay a fine of up to P1 million, Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol warned on Saturday.

The government will start imposing the penalties on violators once the guidelines take effect, Piñol said during the launch of the rice SRP guidelines for Metro Manila and Greater Manila Area covering the provinces of Bulacan, Laguna, and Cavite.

National Food Authority Memorandum Circular AO-2018-10-002 dated Oct. 24, 2018 states that the guidelines will take effect 15 days following its publication in a news-

paper of general circulation and upon registration with the University of the Philippines Law Center.

A national broadsheet published the guidelines last Oct. 26, noted the NFA, which is now under the jurisdiction of the Department of Agriculture.

Meanwhile, NFA Circular OCS-2018-J-01 classified rice as either regular-milled, well-milled, premium, or special.

"There will no longer be names like 'angelica' and 'sinandomeng' for rice sold to the public," said Piñol, who signed both circulars as chairperson of the NFA Council.

Excluded from SRP coverage are special rice varieties, such as those produced in the uplands, he said.

The SRPs for local regular-milled, well-milled and premium rice are P39, P44 and P47, respectively, based on NFA Circular OCS-2018-J-01.

The circular also said the SRP for imported well-milled rice is P39.

"However, there's no imported regular-milled rice," NFA Quality Assurance Division assistant chief Mario Andrada said on the sidelines of the launch held at the Commonwealth Market, along Commonwealth Ave.,

Quezon City.

Andrada noted that imported premium rice has either 2 percent broken grains (PG1) with an SRP of P43, or up to 5 percent broken grains (PG2) to be sold at P40.

Piñol said the government has set the SRPs for rice to help protect consumers from profiteers.

In setting the SRPs, he said, the government considered not just production and related costs but profit as well, so rice traders must not over-charge consumers.

The rule of thumb is to multiply palay price by two to determine the selling price of rice, he said.

"That means if traders bought palay at P18 per kilogram, the selling price must be P36 only," he said. **PNA**

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## Coconut industry seeks to reclaim global stature

The Philippines plans to develop high-yielding coconut varieties as part of efforts to rejuvenate the coconut industry, the country's top earner among agricultural products.

Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol said the Philippines could once again be among the top coconut producing countries in the world in the next 10 years with the development of high-yielding and versatile coconut varieties.

The government is also working on crafting a five-year coconut industry roadmap as well as the release of coco levy funds.

"There are at least three outstanding new coconut varieties developed by Filipino plant breeders which may propel the country back on top again," Piñol said.

The variety, PCA 15-2 which is a cross of the Malayan Red Dwarf and the Tagnanan varieties, produces an estimated six metric tons of copra per year with qualities for the production of virgin coconut oil and coconut

sugar.

MRD-Tagnanan, on the other hand, is adaptable nationwide and matures early, bearing fruits as early as two and a half years.

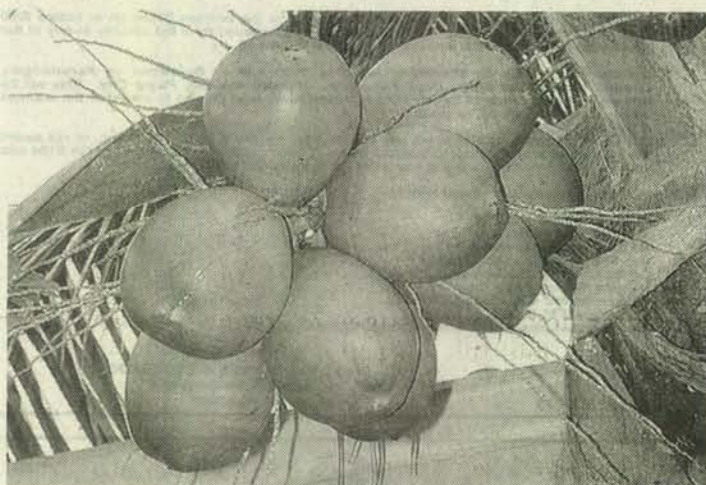
The two other varieties are PCA 15-1 (produced by cross-breeding the Catigan and Laguna Tall) and PCA 15-9 (a cross between the Tacunan and Tagnanan varieties).

Piñol said these varieties could cover an initial 20,000 hectares which could be a source of planting materials for further expansion in the next three years.

The Philippines continues to lose opportunities to Thailand in the highly-lucrative market of other high-value coconut products. It only has 216,000 hectares of coconut farms compared to Thailand's 3.3 million hectares.

"The Philippine coconut industry is a perfect example of a sector with a vast potential which missed the train of development simply because it failed to adjust and respond to the demands of the market," Piñol said.

- Louise Maureen Simeon





# SRP on rice takes effect

## Fancy brand names banned

By **LOUISE MAUREEN SIMEON**

**The government has officially implemented the suggested retail price (SRP) for Filipinos' main staple in a bid to protect consumers and prevent profiteering.**

The agriculture and trade departments as well as the National Food Authority yesterday launched the agreed SRP for rice after several consultations with stakeholders.

"This was already discussed as early as September. It just got delayed because some retailers already bought stocks at higher prices," Agriculture Secretary **Emmanuel Piñol** said during the launch.

"We understand the business so we delayed the implementation but we can no longer delay it further," he added.

All commercial rice to be sold in the public markets

will have an SRP and will only be classified as imported or local regular-milled, well-milled, premium and special rice.

The use of brand names will also be banned to stop deceptive labeling.

Imported well milled rice sells for P39 per kilogram while imported premium rice is priced at P43 per kilo.

The SRP for local regular milled rice is P39 per kilo, P44 per kilo for well milled rice and P47 per kilo for premium rice.

Special rice, which includes the likes of Cordillera heirloom, organic rice, Japonica, Doña Maria, hinu-

may, malido, malagkit and other indigenous rice varieties, will not be regulated.

"There is a 15 day publication period required before we implement the penalty and sanctions. In the meantime, we will just monitor their compliance and observe if they are following," Piñol said.

Piñol said penalties and sanctions include cancellation of NFA licenses, fines and possible criminal charges.

"This could lead to jail of four months to four years and under the Price Act, there will be a fine from P2,000 to a high of P1 million and worse, possible stoppage of the business," he said.

Trade Secretary Ramon Lopez, for his part, said the SRP and labeling would make classifications much simple.

Lopez lauded the DA's

move to cancel the licenses of retailers.

"It is a big deal that the DA and NFA will revoke [their licenses] once they violate. This is very important so other businessmen will follow," Lopez said.

The SRP will initially cover Metro Manila and nearby cities within the Greater Manila area.

Meanwhile, the SRP for supermarkets and other regions will be discussed by the stakeholders next week.

"We will give them (supermarkets) time to change their labels because according to them, they already had them printed in the sacks and we understand that changing of labels should be effective after December," Piñol said.

The SRP will be reviewed every 15 days, the Agri chief said.



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**QUALITY CHECK**  
- Department of Agriculture (DA) Sec. Emmanuel Piñol (right) and Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Sec. Ramon Lopez inspect rice being sold at the Commonwealth Market in Quezon City yesterday, after the launch of the new suggested retail price (SRP) and the prescribed labeling of rice where white is for regular and well-milled, yellow for premium, and blue is for special rice. (Alvin Kasiban)





**AGRICULTURE Secretary Manny Piñol** (with cap) and Trade and Industry Secretary Ramon Lopez inspect the rice being sold at the Commonwealth Market in Quezon City yesterday. Traders started the new system of labeling rice and adopted the suggested retail price (SRP) for rice. (Alvin Kasiban)

2 CORINTHIANS 4:6

# Abante

UNA SA BALITA

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**NAG-IKOT** kahapon sa mga tindahan ng bigas sa Commonwealth Market sa Quezon City sina Agriculture Secretary Manny Piñol at Trade and Industry Secretary Ramon Lopez kasabay ng pagpapatupad ng suggested retail price sa nasabing produkto. *(Jimmy Carbo)*

2 CORINTHIANS 4:6

# Abante

UNA SA BALITA

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## Mga rice dealer sasampolan 'pag lumabag sa SRP

NAGBABALA kahapon si Department of Agriculture (DA) Secretary **Manny Piñol** na posibleng bawian ng lisensiya at patawan ng kaukulang parusa ang mga tiwaling negosyante na lalabag sa suggested retail price na sinimulang ipatupad ng gobyerno kahapon.

Batay sa inilabas na SRP ng DA at Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), ang well milled rice at imported well milled rice ay mabibili na sa P39 kada kilo habang ang local well milled rice ay P44 kada kilo.

Ang imported premium grade rice ay nasa P40 hanggang P43 kada kilo at P47 kada kilo naman ang premium grade rice.

Hindi naman umano manghuhuli agad ang DA at DTI ng mga lalabag sa SRP dahil saka pa lamang nila ito

gagawin makalipas ang dalawang linggo matapos mailathala ang SRP sa bigas.

Pero nagbabala si Piñol sa mga rice dealer na babawiin ang kanilang lisensiya kapag hindi sumunod sa SRP ng pamahalaan.

"Ang unang mangyayari tatanggalan ng lisensiya. Pangalawa, puwede mabilanggo mula apat na buwan hanggang apat na taon. Under the Price Act, puwede ka patawan ng penalty na P2,000 hanggang isang milyon and of course mahihinto ka sa negosyo mo," paliwanag ni Piñol.

Kasabay nito, hinikayat ni Piñol ang publiko na isumbong sa mga awtoridad ang mga tiwaling rice dealer na magbebenta sa mas mataas na presyo. **(Tina Mendoza)**





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## Piñol meets Sagay massacre victims' kin

BACOLOD CITY (PNA) – Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol met with the relatives of the nine victims of the massacre in Sagay City, Negros Occidental to turn over financial assistance as he pushed for the conduct of an impartial investigation on the killings on Friday.

"I wanted to see for myself the families of the victims of the Sagay massacre. Some of them were farm workers. I met with them and extended financial assistance from the Department of Agriculture (DA). We also assured them of additional help," he said.

He did not disclose the amount provided by the DA to the victims' families.

Piñol told the families he did not come to pass judgment on the incident. "What I know is not enough. There are investigations going on by the proper agencies," he added.

The DA chief said the government supports an impartial investigation and wants whoever is behind the heinous crime to be brought to justice.

In Sagay, Piñol was joined by Governor Alfredo Marañon Jr. and Mayor Alfredo Marañon III during his visit to the victims' wake at the city's gymnasium.

He then proceeded to Bago City to inspect the province's rice processing complex before go-

ing back to Bacolod City where he held a press conference in the afternoon.

Last Tuesday, Agrarian Reform Secretary John Castricones also turned over financial assistance and mobile phone units to the victims' families after President Rodrigo Duterte's visit was cancelled because of inclement weather.

Meanwhile, in Bacolod before noon, the National Fact-Finding Mission led by the National Union of Peoples' Lawyers and Gabriela Women's Party also called on the government for the conduct of an impartial investigation.

"We call on President Duterte to pursue, prosecute and bring the perpetrators and their masterminds to the bars of justice. We call on him to conduct an impartial investigation free from the involvement of local police, agencies and public officials in Negros Island," the group said in a report distributed during a press conference at the Negros Press Club office.

Gabriela Women's Party Rep. Arlene Brosas said the Makabayan bloc filed a House resolution directing the committees on agrarian reform and human rights to conduct a joint inquiry in aid of legislation on the October 20 killings at Hacienda Nene, Purok Firetree in Barangay Bulanon.



AS DUTERTE ORDERS PROBE

# DA aids 'Sagay 9' families

Government tagged NPA rebels as behind the massacre but other sources claimed it was the result of a land ownership dispute

By **Kuhlin Leslie Garcia**

As government vowed to serve justice to the victims of the Sagay massacre in Negros Occidental, the **Department of Agriculture (DA)** yesterday assured financial and livelihood assistance to their grieving families.

Nine plantation workers were killed on 20 October while sharing dinner in a plot they cultivated for root crop farming in between sugarcane season.

They were strafed with bullets from high-powered firearms by no less than six men as they were under a tent where they also stayed the nights prior to the massacre.

**I emphasized that I only came to provide assistance on behalf of the Duterte administration.**

They were also doused with gasoline before they were burned by the perpetrators of the crime with some of them still alive when they were torched, according to reports.

The nine farmers were newly signed members of the Negros Federation of Sugar Workers (NSFW),

an above-ground organization being linked by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) to the Maoist Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army (CPP-NPA).

Those killed were Eglicerio Cambannga Villegas, 36; Angeliffa Dumaguit Arsenal, 47; Paterno Baroy, 48; Rene Laurencio Sr.; Morena Mendoza, 48; Marcelina Dumaguit; Rommel Bantigue, 41; Jomarie Oghayon, 16, and Marchtel Sumicad, 17, all of Sagay.

There were 14 farmers at the tent at that time. Only five of them managed to escape by crawling in the field and hiding behind stacks of sacks as the attack took place.

Government tagged NPA rebels as behind the massacre but other sources claimed it was the result of a land ownership dispute. The farm, now known as Hacienda Nene (also referred to as Hacienda Barbara), is reportedly being leased to a businesswoman by its owners, said to be a family of politicians.

Malacañang condemned the "dastardly act" and assured families of the victims the government will conduct a "thorough and impartial" investigation of the killings.

Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol said President Rodrigo Duterte wants support extended to the families of the victims.

Piñol met with the victims' families recently and ensured government's intervention in their plight.

"In my conversation with the victims' families, I emphasized that I only came to provide assistance on behalf of the Duterte Administration," Piñol said.

Piñol said President Duterte would like to see that justice is served to the victims. He relayed that the Chief Executive had vowed to punish those behind the killings.

According to Piñol, Sagay City Mayor Alfredo Maranon II also assured the families of the victims there will be no letup in police investigation on the matter. Maranon said all angles are being looked into aside from the earlier AFP and Philippine National Police (PNP) pronouncements as possible motives of the killings.

Government agencies and other independent parties are conducting different probes on the incident.

But the Department of Justice is observing closely the developments in what is now collectively known as the "Sagay 9."

Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra said the agency will not wait for the results of the police investigation if there is a need to dig deeper into the case.

"We'll not wait for the results of the PNP investigation. If we think that the circumstances require our immediate participation, we shall conduct our own investigation," Guevarra said.

**There were 14 farmers at the tent at that time. Only five of them managed to escape by crawling in the field and hiding behind stacks of sacks as the attack took place.**

The NSFW condemned the killings.

The Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) denied the farm was under land reform program as claimed by the NSFW.

Presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo, meanwhile, said the massacre of the workers would affect efforts to resume peace talks with the communists.

"It will have a factor in consideration of the future peace talks," Panelo said.

He added initial claims by the surviving victims pointed to the armed men who sprayed them with bullets were members of the CPP-NPA.

Col. Noel Detoyato, AFP-Public Affairs Office chief, also claimed the Sagay massacre was under Oplan "Bungkalan" and "Okupasyon" — the CPP-NPA's own agrarian program designed to occupy private farm lands.

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## Gov't urged to focus on main harvest areas

The government must allocate more investments in major rice areas to ensure improved production and

strengthen its competitiveness, former Agriculture Secretary William Dar said. Dar, president of Inang-

Lupa Movement, said government investments should be focused on the country's top 10 rice-producing prov-

inces to produce more palay. This should allow the Philippines to compete with neighboring ASEAN countries, he added.

"Much-needed funds should be poured to mechanize rice farming, put up more post-harvest and milling facilities, construct more irrigation systems, and empower small farmers' groups to be entrepreneurs," he said.

Data showed that the top 10 rice areas produced 8.96 million metric tons of palay last year, or half of the total harvest of 19.28 million MT.

These areas include Nueva Ecija, Isabela, Pangasinan, Cagayan, Iloilo, Camarines Sur, Tarlac, North Cotabato, Leyte and Negros Occidental.

On top of farm mechanization, Dar said the government should also promote the proper use of hybrid and

inbred rice varieties, and water resource conservation technology and practices.

"In particular, farmers should be trained on modern rice production and post-harvest technology, proper fertilization, and agri-entrepreneurship. Government should also provide small farmers affordable credit through the Land Bank of the Philippines," he said.

The cost of producing palay in the Philippines remains high at P12.72 per kilogram compared with Thailand's P8.86 per kilo and Vietnam's P6.22 per kilo.

"Mechanizing rice production and harvest operations contribute greatly in reducing production cost of rice," Dar said.

At present, the country's farm mechanization level is 1.23 horsepower per hectare, way below the four hp/ha in South Korea and China.

Dar also urged the government to increase the budgets of the National Irrigation Administration and the Bureau of Soils and Water Management.

The additional budget will be used by **NIA** to construct new national irrigation systems and repair old ones.

"Government should also restructure the National Food Authority into a logistic provider, focusing on maintaining buffer stocks to stabilize rice supply and prices during lean months, and distribute to affected areas during calamities," Dar said.

"They should campaign to promote higher use of balanced amounts of inorganic and organic fertilizers to produce more rice grains, reduce rice consumption and wastage, and promote other staples," he added. — **Louise Maureen Simeon**





# A wee bit of good news about coconut for a change



**WHY NOT?**  
**DR. EMIL Q. JAVIER**

“There are those who look at things the way they are, and ask why... I dream of things that never were, and ask why not?”  
- Robert Kennedy

In previous columns, I have dwelt on the prevailing discouraging conditions that confront our coconut farmers and the coconut industry.

Our coconut farmers who are already

among the poorest of the poor suffered yet another setback with the precipitous (30%) decline of the price of coconut oil in the world vegetable oil market. From P6-P8 per nut, the farm gate price is now down to P4.50 per nut.

The coconut levy fund (CLF) bill which will release the P100 billion now frozen in the national treasury to support the coconut industry has been returned to Congress after a threat of veto by the President unless certain provisions were amended.

And the budget of the **Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA)** which national agency is tasked to support coconut was slashed for repeated failure to spend the agency's previous years' allocations.

Here's a wee bit of good news, for a change:

Actually, the fortunes of our coconut sector can be enhanced if we take resolute steps along four strategic directions, namely: 1) raising primary productivity of the coconut with hybrids and adequate hybridization, 2) intercropping for greater productivity and higher farmers' incomes and more rural employment, 3) increasingly switch to wet processing (instead of copra processing) to exploit the full value of all parts of the coconut, which in turn will require village-level, moderately-sized processing hubs which will generate more rural employment and broaden ownership of the coconut value chain (inclusive growth), and 4) downstream integration of oleochemicals production.

The first challenge is the replanting of the reported 68 million senile, unproductive trees out of the standing

population of 324 million trees. However, instead of replanting with seedlings of unknown genetic provenance, we should replant with high yielding hybrids. Our national average production is only 0.75 tons copra per hectare per year. The 12 hybrids developed by PCA with adequate fertilization have potentials of 4-6 tons copra per hectare per year.

**Oddly, except for a few thousand coconut hybrid seedlings produced each year in the PCA stations in Zamboanga, Davao, and Aroman, Cotabato, there is as yet, no program to propagate hybrid seedling on a scale that will make a difference.**

#### First small steps for a national coconut hybrids replanting program

*Realizing that PCA does not (and need not) have the capacity to meet the country's requirements for hybrid planting materials, the PCA regional manager for CALABARZON (Region IVA), Ms. Erlene Manohar, with the encouragement of PCA Administrator Billy dela Rosa, embarked on a pilot project early this year to establish hybridization gardens with farmer cooperators/seed producers.*

The overall national objective is to produce 10 million dwarf x tall hybrid seedlings each year. With a hectare potentially producing 10,000 seedlings per year, all we need are 1,000 hectares of hybridization gardens. The idea is to mobilize 250 coconut farmers each with four hectares to democratize ownership of the seed business. They will be strategically dispersed in the major coconut growing

provinces to reduce costs of transport and to buffer the seed production system from the vagaries of floods, droughts, and disease and pest infestations.

The farmer/cooperators and their laborers will be taught and supervised by PCA plant breeders: 1) how to grow the dwarf female parents, 2) how to emasculate (rid the inflorescence of the male flowers), and 3) properly time the dusting of pollen on the female flowers with the pollen of tall varieties supplied by PCA.

However, it turned out that in Quezon province alone there were already plantings of dwarf varieties in Sampaloc, Tagkawayan, Padre Burgos and Tiaong with an aggregate area of at least 70 hectares. The owners have agreed with PCA to become hybrid seed producers. The individual dwarf female parent trees are now being tagged by PCA technicians. Since the original seedlings were sourced from PCA anyway, the PCA plant breeders are confident of their genetic provenance.

Many of the trees are already flowering and therefore there is no need to wait. Actual emasculation and artificial pollination are underway. The first coconut hybrid seedlings should become available by late 2019.

Additionally, 20 hectares of dwarf parents were planted in Tiaong and at the Institute of Plant Breeding (IPB), in UP Los Baños. The plan is to establish more hybrid seed gardens in Laguna, Batangas, and the rest of Quezon and at the UP Land Grant in the Sierra Madre to meet the requirements of Region IVA and neighboring provinces.

#### National scale up to start 2019

With the encouraging start in Region IVA CALABARZON, PCA has allocated P80 million for next year to initiate the establishment of similar hybrid gardens with farmer cooperators/seed producers in the rest of the regions. Each of the regions will start with a modest target of 5-10 hectares, to expand later as planting materials become available.

#### Next step: A national coconut-based farming systems network

Meanwhile, preliminary discussions are underway among PCA, the Agricultural Systems Institute of the College of Agriculture and Food Science at UP Los Baños and senior members of the Coalition for Agriculture Modernization in the Philippines (CAMP) for a coconut-based farming systems network. The objective is to fully utilize the estimated two million hectares of coconut which have no intercroops underneath.

Funding support will come from the Bureau of Agriculture Research (DABAR) and the Los Baños-based Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development (DOST-PCAARRD)

\*\*\*\*\*

*Dr. Emil Q. Javier is a Member of the National Academy of Science and Technology (NAST) and also Chair of the Coalition for Agriculture Modernization in the Philippines (CAMP).*

*For any feedback, email eqjavier@yahoo.com.*

# The Manila Times

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## QC launches vegetable growing competition amid inflation

IN a bid to cushion inflation among urban dwellers, Quezon City Vice Mayor Joy Belmonte, in partnership with Philippine Horticulture Society Inc. (PHSI), have launched a grow-your-own-vegetables competition entitled "Oh My Gulay, Horti Pa More!," at the Quezon Memorial Circle on Oct. 13.

"We want to encourage our constituents to plant vegetables in their homes and backyard gardens not just for food security, but also for healthy eating," Belmonte said. "This competition should show that, even with a few materials and limited space, city residents can already start their own urban farm."

At the launch of the competi-

tion, participants were given an instructional lecture as well as growing kits consisting of seeds and growing pots.

Each participant was tasked to sow their vegetable seeds on October 15, 2018 and track the growth of their plant until the harvesting date on January 15, 2019. Winning entries will be judged based on the visual appearance, condition, and quality of the vegetable.

Belmonte, who has spearheaded the city's own urban farming initiative entitled Joy of Urban Farming, said the competition is a prelude to PHSI's flagship event HortiKultura Filipina 2019, set at the Quezon Circle gardens from February 1 to 10 next year.



## Agri-Talk

By ZAC B. SARIAN

# Tailor Beats The Soldiers In Farming

*(Memoirs of an Agri Journalist)*

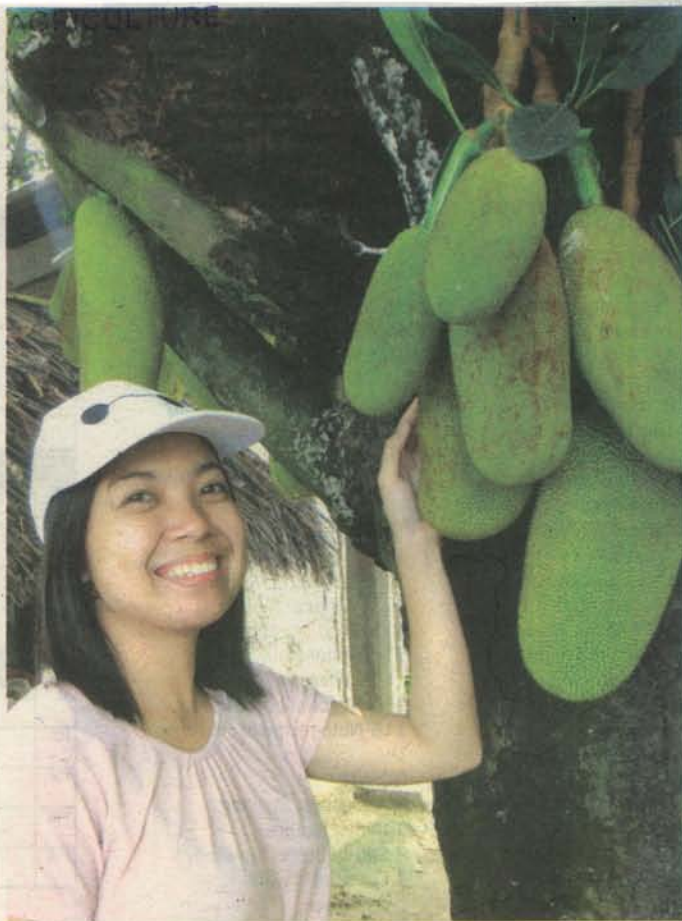
Sometime in the early 1990s, we visited the farm of Eddie Odsigue in Brgy. Aduas, Teresa, Rizal. It was quite a big farm planted to a wide variety of fruit trees and various short-term cash crops. What was most outstanding that we noticed was that it was so far the biggest farm that we had visited with jackfruit numbering about 2,000 productive trees.

He was making good income from his jackfruit. He related that jackfruit trees don't bear fruit uniformly. Some may bear just a few fruits but there are others that would bear 20 or more fruits per tree. On the average, each marketable fruit weighed about 10 kilos.

He revealed that each tree yielded an average of eight marketable fruits in one year. At that time, he was selling his fruits at ₱15 per kilo or ₱150 pesos per fruit. That was a good price because the peso had not yet depreciated much.

Aside from his jackfruit, Eddie made money from various cash crops that he planted in between the jackfruit and his other trees. These included bananas, *gabi*, peanut, various vegetables like eggplant, tomato, okra, *ampalaya*, *patani*, *camote*, and others. Every day, he would bring to the Antipolo market whatever he harvested from his farm. That could be worth a thousand pesos or more each day.

Eddie was really making good in his farm when we visited him. He had constructed a big house, had sent his children to college, and he had a swimming pool that was supplied with water from a spring about a kilometer away. He bought the place with a spring and piped in the water to his farm not only for the swimming pool but for watering his plants.



**FRUITS TOO MANY.** Some of the smaller fruits may be harvested for use as vegetable so that the few that are retained can develop into bigger marketable fruits.

Eddie was a former tailor who sewed uniforms for the Army. He revealed that when Martial Law was declared in 1972, some of the Presidential Security Guards who had become his friends invited him to go to Teresa where they could settle and claim some public land. That's what they did and got what they had wanted.

The soldiers had their own farm land and Eddie had his. It was difficult to develop the property because there was no water that was readily available. The soldiers also did their own farming. They planted various crops which perished during summer due to drought or due to fire. Their plants got burned. Eventually, the soldiers gave up.

In the case of Eddie, he persisted. He took pains in obtaining water to water his plants during the dry months. He soon found out that when the young trees have survived the hot summer, they will not perish. When the rains came in May, they got well established.

In 1978, exactly six years from the time Eddie occupied his lot in Teresa, he decided to give up being a tailor and become a full-time farmer. His persistence paid off and he became well off through farming.

Eddie who had no previous experience in growing crops beat the soldiers in the game called farming. So can you if you really want to.



## **'Daing festival' para sa pagsusulong ng kita ng mga mangingisda**

**I**NILUNSAAD kamakailan ng lokal na pamahalaan ng Noveleta ang unang "Daing (dried fish) Festival" sa baybayin ng seaside El Palacio Hotel, San Rafael IV ng nasabing bayan, para sa hakbang na maiayos at mapaganda ang kabuhayan ng mga mangingisda na magbibigay-daan sa pagkakaroon ng mas malaking kita.

Pinangunahan ni Mayor Dino Reyes Chua, kasama ang mga opisyal ng Barangay San Rafael IV, ang paglulunsad ng unang piyesta ng bayan, kung saan tampok ang iba't ibang uri ng produktong lamang-dagat sa pangunguna ng daing.

"Atin pong itinatag ang 'Daing Festival' upang makilala po ang ating bayan, partikular sa Barangay San Rafael, para po mas maraming tao ang makakilala ng 'Daing' products," pahayag ni Chua sa isang panayam.

Nagsalu-salo ang mayor, mga lokal na opisyal at ang pinuno ng San Rafael Ruth Samartino sa isang boodle fight, tampok ang "daing" at iba pang lamang-dagat bilang kanilang pananghalian.

"Dito po ay pinapakita ng ating barangay San Rafael ang mga produkto na nagagawa nila sa pagdadaing ng mga huli nilang isda dahil karamihan sa kanila ay pagdadaing at pagtutuyo ang ikinabubuhay," dagdag ni Chua.

Bukod sa kanilang nakasanayang huling isda at sa pakikipagkalakalan sa pamamagitan ng bagong tayong Noveleta Fish Port, na pinondohan ng Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, pinagkakaabalahan na rin ngayon ng mga residente sa lugar ang dried fish business – na gumagawa ng mga daing na "lawlaw," "dilis" at ibang uri ng isda upang makatulong na mapalaki ang kanilang kita.

Ayon kay Rommel Atalia, executive assistant ng alkade, ang pagdiriwang nila ng "Daing Festival" ay kasabay ng pista ng kanilang patron na San Rafael Archangel tuwing ika-24 ng Oktubre.



## Food-borne illnesses cost \$110 B per year in mid-income countries

A new World Bank study finds that the impact of unsafe food costs low- and middle-income economies about \$110 billion in lost productivity and medical costs per year.

It argues that a large proportion of these costs can be avoided through forward-looking preventative measures which will improve how food is produced, handled and prepared from farm to fork.

Reducing the costs and better managing the risks of unsafe food will contribute significantly to the achievement of multiple Sustainable Development Goals, especially those related to poverty, hunger, and well-being.

According to estimates from

the World Health Organization, foodborne diseases caused some 600 million illnesses and 420,000 premature deaths in 2010. This global burden of foodborne disease is unequally distributed.

Low- and middle-income countries in South Asia, South-east Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa account for 41 percent of the global population yet 53 percent of all foodborne illness and 75 percent of related deaths.

Unsafe food threatens young children the most: although children under five are only nine percent of the world's population, they suffer almost 40 percent of food-borne diseases and 30 percent of deaths related to unsafe food.

*The Safe Food Imperative: Accelerating Progress in Low- and Middle-Income Countries* translates these grim statistics into economic terms, using 2016 income data, to focus government attention on the need for stepped-up investment, regulatory reform and measures to promote behavior change.

The total productivity loss associated with food-borne disease in low- and middle-income countries is estimated by the World Bank at \$95.2 billion a year. The cost of treatment of food-borne illnesses is estimated at \$15 billion annually.

Although more difficult to quantify in aggregate, the economic costs of unsafe food take many additional forms, includ-

ing losses of farm and company sales; reduced trade revenues; consumer avoidance of more perishable, high nutrient foods; food waste, and others.

"Food safety receives relatively little policy attention and is under-resourced. Action is normally reactive – to major foodborne disease outbreaks or trade interruptions – rather than preventative," said Juergen Voegele, senior director of the Food and Agriculture Global Practice at the World Bank.

"By focusing on domestic food safety more deliberately, countries can strengthen the competitiveness of their farmers and food industries and develop their human capital. After all, safe food is essential

to fuel a healthy, educated and resilient workforce," he said.

For many low and middle-income countries, rapid demographic, dietary and other changes are contributing to wider exposure of populations to foodborne hazards, stretching if not overwhelming prevailing capacities to manage these.

"Governments in low- and middle-income countries not only need to invest more in food safety but also invest more smartly," said Steven Jaffee, lead agriculture economist at the World Bank and co-author of the report.

"This means investing in the foundational knowledge, human resources and infrastruc-

ture for food safety systems; realizing synergies among investments in food safety, human health and environmental protection; and using public investment to leverage private investment," Jaffee added.

The report supports a paradigm shift in approaches to food safety regulation. While the traditional model centers on enforcement through product testing and food facility inspections – and the application of legal and financial penalties for infractions – greater emphasis is needed on providing information and other resources to motivate and assist a variety of stakeholders to comply with food safety regulation.