

# DA drafts guidelines, consults stakeholders on agri investments

In response to issues and concerns raised about the implications of agribusiness investments from the People's Republic of China (PROC) on local agriculture and fisheries development, the Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), has drafted guidelines that would govern all agribusiness ventures in the country.

The guidelines, embodied in a draft memorandum circular, were presented on December 13 in a consultative forum involving various stakeholders of the NAFC.

In his remarks during the forum, DA Undersecretary and NAFC Executive Director Bernie G. Fondevilla said the implementation of the various agreements of the DA, DAR, and DENR with PROC has been suspended so that consultations can be conducted to resolve issues, thresh out problems and address concerns relative to the deals.

He stressed that the Philippine Government is keen on pursuing these deals. He cited as reason the results of a World Bank study that said more money should be devoted to agriculture and fisheries as vehicles for rural development and poverty alleviation.

He hoped that the consultations will come up with specific proposals on how to move forward with the draft guidelines as well as investments agreement.

## Draft guidelines

In her presentation, DA Assistant Secretary Josyline Javelosa said the draft guidelines provide general policies, specific rules and operating definitions for implementers and cooperators undertaking agribusiness investments. The guidelines involve 13 policy statements (see box, page 4). She added that the implementation guidelines cover all

## Agreements with China

Asec Javelosa likewise presented the various agreements signed by the Philippine Government, through the DA, with the PROC and various Chinese investors. These agreements, she stressed, supported the DA's Goal 1 and Goal 2 program as well as the DA's five-pillar programs which

to 5-Pillar Program. These contracts were the framework agreement for enhanced cooperation in agriculture, two agreements in support of technology and extension, three involving postharvest technologies and other infrastructure, two marketing agreements, and two agreements in support of the development of agribusiness lands. The seven others involved private initiatives: four in bioethanol projects and three in fisheries.

The framework agreement affirms and expands the coverage of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) on Agriculture and Fisheries Cooperation the Philippine Government signed with the PROC in 1999. The new agreement includes cooperation in food security, job creation and poverty alleviation. It also covers biotechnology, biofuels, agri-tourism, post harvest development and handling, food processing and marketing technologies.

Additionally, an MOU on SPS Cooperation between the Department of Agriculture and the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine was signed. It recognizes



**AGRIBUSINESS CONSULTATION.** Stakeholders from industry, non-government organizations and academe gathered to review and enhance the draft rules for agribusiness investments. DA Asst. Sec. Josyline Javelosa (above left) presented the draft document while Usec and NAFC ED Bernie G. Fondevilla chaired the forum.

agribusiness and agroforestry ventures in private, forest and public land that are within the jurisdiction of DA, DAR, and DENR.

It shall be signed and issued jointly by the three convergence agencies, she explained.

focus efforts on irrigation, credit facilitation, foreign and local market access, postharvest storage and other infrastructure, and technology and extension toward stakeholder profitability.

Of the 18 agreements signed with the PROC, DA was signatory to 10 contracts related

(see *DRAFT GUIDES*, page 4)

## Inside

Christmas message	page 2
US Ambassador in DA	page 8
Social mobilization	page 6
NAFC hosts DA team-building	page 7
Changes in GMA dryers	page 8





## Christmas Message

*“Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace and good will to men.”*

*Luke 2:14*

As we celebrate a blessed Christmas and wish for ourselves and others a Prosperous New Year, we ought to think of all the blessings that filled our lives especially the first great blessing that came on a holy night in Bethlehem. This is the appropriate time to reflect on ourselves and think whether we have in turn made the most of such blessings in improving our lives and making others' lives better.

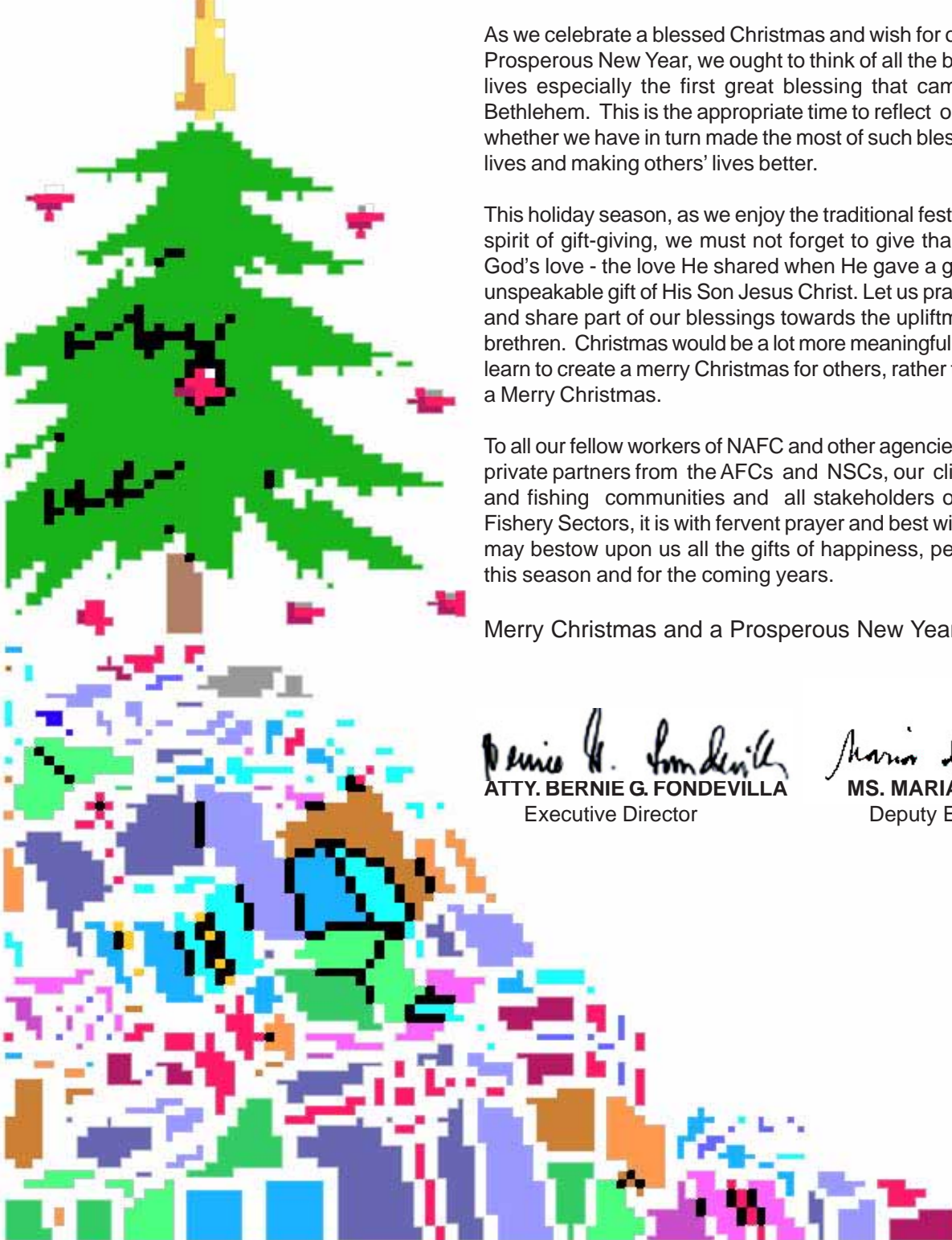
This holiday season, as we enjoy the traditional festivities and share in the spirit of gift-giving, we must not forget to give thanks for the wonder of God's love - the love He shared when He gave a gift beyond words - the unspeakable gift of His Son Jesus Christ. Let us pray for the less fortunate and share part of our blessings towards the upliftment of the lives of our brethren. Christmas would be a lot more meaningful if we can make people learn to create a merry Christmas for others, rather than just wishing them a Merry Christmas.

To all our fellow workers of NAFC and other agencies of the DA Family, our private partners from the AFCs and NSCs, our clients from the farming and fishing communities and all stakeholders of the Agricultural and Fishery Sectors, it is with fervent prayer and best wishes that the Almighty may bestow upon us all the gifts of happiness, peace, and good health this season and for the coming years.

Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year!

  
 ATTY. BERNIE G. FONDEVILLA  
 Executive Director

  
 MS. MARIA LUZ A. ENRIQUEZ  
 Deputy Executive Director





# ED Fondevilla sets NAFC direction for '08

NAFC's operations next year will roll along four major directions, DA Undersecretary and NAFC ED Bernie G. Fondevilla announced during the Joint National Sectoral Committees (NSCs) and Regional Agricultural and Fishery Councils' (RAFCs) Meeting held on December 14 at the Apacible Hall Conference Room.

The direction-setting was one of the items discussed during the meeting that gathered the heads of the five NSCs and 14 RAFCs in a forum aimed at information exchange and operational coordination.

The four directions are the enhancement of the NAFC's operations that have been fairly constant over the last 20 years, crafting of a convergence plan for modernizing agriculture and fisheries, recruitment of new and young employees with bright and innovative ideas into the folds of the agency, and further capacity building among the current employees pool, ED Fondevilla said.

The operational enhancement, ED Fondevilla explained, aims to make the agency more relevant in terms of addressing the concerns of the agriculture and fisheries stakeholders and pursuing the monitoring thrust of the Department of Agriculture (DA), specially as they concern the DA's five pillar program. The program focuses efforts on irrigation, credit facilitation, foreign and local market access, postharvest storage and other infrastructure, and technology and extension toward stakeholder profitability.

One approach, he added, is to activate the NAF Council. Some NAFC employees have suggested for the restructuring of the council to make it more dynamic and responsive to current needs, not only of the DA, but of the agriculture and fisheries sectors at large.



**JOINT NSC-RAFC MEETING.** The chairpersons of the national sectoral committees and the regional AFCs meet with NAFC officials to discuss results of their consultative operations in 2007 and the new development thrusts in 2008. Top photo shows NAFC ED Bernie G. Fondevilla, DED Ma. Luz Enriquez and RAFC President Ric Provido leading discussions with forum participants, some of whom are shown in lower picture.

ED Fondevilla also added that the DA is expected to give more responsibilities to the NAFC. He hoped that the NAFC is up to the challenge, noting that monitoring an irrigation project is already difficult. Such difficulty will be magnified if the NAFC will also focus on farm-to-market roads and other DA programs.

The formulation of the convergence plan has been targeted for some years, but some conceptual and operational problems have hindered its development. It is expected that these constraints will be addressed in the coming year.

ED Fondevilla also related that Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap has sounded off the NAFC, the AFCs and the NSCs on the possibility of recruiting new people in the agency and its consultative mechanisms. He stressed though that current members are still welcome, noting that benefits can still be gained from their experience and wisdom.

Underlying these strategic directions is human resource

capacity. ED Fondevilla stressed the need to build the capacities of the employees. In the coming months, he said, value formation and skills development among the NAFC staff shall be reinforced. He said that hopefully NAFC will remain a professional institution, with its staff continually working regardless of who heads the DA or the agency.

## Continuing concerns

The joint meeting also discussed some continuing concerns, namely: the agency commitment to provide the AFCs with service vehicles that will aid in their monitoring work and the implementation of the Diversified Farm Income and Market Development Program (DFIMDP) which tasks the NAFC and AFCs in select areas to conduct marketing related stakeholder consultations.

On the DFIMDP, ED Fondevilla announced that

program funds will be transferred to DA-Regional Field Units concerned to make them readily available to the AFCs. He reported that the memoranda of agreements with the RFUs and other identified institutions are now being processed to effect the fund transfer.

## RAFC outputs

During the joint meeting, the RAFCs reported their major accomplishments for the year as follows:

The AFCs assisted 23 fish processors nationwide affected by the imposition of strict quarantine regulations; assisted the Bureau of Plant Industry in the conduct of the national mango production survey to determine the presence of seed and pulp weevil in all mango producing provinces; proposed fuel subsidy for food production; successfully proposed the extension of the Agricultural Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (ACEF) program; assisted in the implementation of the village level processing centers for bananas, vegetable, and other agricultural products; requested LGUs to disallow the slaughter of hybrid carabaos; spearheaded the integration of the supply chain in the hog industry; and conducted monitoring of DA banner programs.

## NSC outputs

For their part, the NSCs reported their accomplishments, during the year, presented by committee;

### Committee on Food Crops

- ◆ Recommended the implementation of a GAP Program specifically for mango farming

- ◆ Intensified promotion of the indigenous vegetables particularly as substitutes for conventional vegetables.

- ◆ Reviewed overlapping functions pesticide matters.

see *NAFC DIRECTIONS*, page 5



## ***DRAFT GUIDELINES for agribusiness presented to public, from page 1***

the growing importance that SPS measures play in protecting the health and life plants, animals and humans amidst increasing global trade.

The broadening and deepening of cooperation between the Philippines and China on SPS is particularly important as China has become the third largest trading partner of the Philippines.

On technology and extension, the DA signed an agreement with the Guandong Academy of Agricultural Sciences (GDAA) for the development of 35-hectare techno demo farm on sweet corn and vegetables in Mabalacat, Pampanga, while the BFAR signed an agreement with the same entity for technical cooperation in mariculture. Pursuant of the latter, a Sino-Filipino Fishery Cooperation Pilot Zone shall be established within the year to implement the project, including the setting up of eight units of net cages in the agreed areas. The project will initially start in Region VIII and expand to other regions as agreed by both parties. On postharvest and other infrastructure, the DA signed an agreement with the China CAMC Engineering Co. for the preparation of a feasibility study on the provision of stationary and mobile ice plants, ice storage facilities, refrigerated vans, cold storages and any such other facilities, which are classified or identified as part of the cold-chain. The project components included the provision of 150 units mobile and stationary ice plants nationwide, and the establishment of cold storage facility in Dipolog City. Estimated project cost is US\$10 million. The project supports BFAR's mariculture project discussed above.

The DA also signed a MOA with CAMCE for the rehabilitation of the Navotas Fish Port Complex (NFPC), the country's premier fish center and one of the largest in Asia. The program includes the construction of a shipyard and the establishment of cold storage facility.

### **Draft agribusiness investment guides**

The proposed general rules and policies that aim to govern agribusiness investments are as follows:

1. The food security and sufficiency of the country shall be the utmost priority at all times. All national policies relative to food security shall be applied subject to environmental considerations.
2. Ecologically sound farming technologies, methods, implements and inputs (i.e. balanced fertilization, organic farming, and integrated pest management) shall be adopted in both public and private agribusiness/upland agroforestry contracts. Thus, these should be in accordance with existing DENR rules and regulations.
3. All investment agreements involving government lands, that is, those forest lands and untenured areas, should comply with the rules and regulations of the agency having jurisdiction over them and subject to its approval. For investment contracts involving private lands, the National Steering Committee can facilitate and/or refer investors to possible partners.
4. Fiscal partners can be availed by investors based on applicable existing rules and regulations and other issuances.
5. Patents shall be in pursuance to (sic) the Intellectual Property Code of the Philippines or Republic Act No. 8293.
6. Any imports of agricultural and fishery inputs shall be allowed only if these meet the standards based on all existing quarantine rules and regulations of the country.
7. Public lands (LGUs, SUCs, military reservations, ancestral domains, and penal colonies)/private agricultural lands under process to be placed under CARP coverage, those under litigation, and which may be subject to land reform are not eligible for agribusiness investment until such time that it is transferred to the prospective CARP beneficiaries.
8. Priority for agribusiness development should be given to CARP distributed lands, areas underutilized.
9. The welfare of the settlers/occupants in committed lands shall always be protected. They shall continue to reside in the area and the investors shall ensure that they shall be provided with livelihood opportunities.
10. The sharing of risks, costs and benefits between and among the farmers and the investors shall always be to the best advantage of all parties to the agreement/contract.
11. Termination of the contract in case of non-compliance with the terms and conditions stipulated under the agreement should be acceptable to all parties.
12. Investors should provide corporate social services within the area of investment
13. Monitoring and evaluation of the project implementation including the private contracts shall be conducted regularly under the Convergence Framework as provided in Joint DA-DAR-DENR Memorandum Circular No. 2006-1 dated July 31, 2006.

On market access, the DA signed with Jiangnan Wholesale Market for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables for the provision of a

5,000 square meter space for Philippine fresh fruits and vegetables. The Jiangnan market handles 70% of the wholesale trade

in fruits and vegetables in China. Access to this market is critical to establishing a Philippine presence in the whole China market. A promising export is Philippine mango.

DA also signed an agreement with Zongbao Fiber Company for the supply of some 100,000 MT of coco coir fiber.

The agreements regarding the development of agribusiness lands has regained the biggest and most controversial investments. The first agreement involved an investment of Jilin Fuhua. The MOA signed promises a financing of 30 million RMB or an equivalent of US\$ 3.84M from the China Development Bank on 1,000,000 hectares of land for hybrid corn, hybrid sorghum and hybrid rice. Most of the direct beneficiaries of these lowland crops investments will be agrarian reform beneficiaries whose land holdings lacked sufficient capital infusion to become fully productive.

Another investment agreement signed is the Joint Development of Renewable Energy Project with the Agricultural Department of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region (ADGZAR). ADGZAR has committed to invest in the development of 20,000 hectares of land for cassava and 20,000 hectares of land for sugarcane for the eventual production and processing of fuel-grade alcohol. The investors have estimated the investment requirement for cassava to be P15,000 per hectare or \$6.2 Million dollars for 20,000 hectares, while the investment per hectare in sugarcane is at P53,000 per hectare or \$21.8 Million.

#### **Stakeholder response**

One of the major points for clarification raised by several stakeholders was the nature of the 14.1 Million alienable and disposable (A&D) land that have been identified for agribusiness development. The questions focused on whether these lands have been freshly declared as A&D lands and are therefore new as intended



## ***NAFC directions, from page 3***

### **Committee on Commercial Crops**

♦ Implemented a National Seedpiece Production System and established regional propagation centers in Isabela, Bohol, Bukidnon and South Cotabato.

♦ Formulated the Philippine National Standards for Cacao or Cocoa Beans.

### **Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture**

♦ Initiated discussion on the following: fisherfolk's demand for compensation for loss of income due to removal of "payaos" as well as the imposition of 60 days fishing ban period during the seismic survey in Tañon Strait

♦ Fast track the processing of application for accreditation and certification of fishery products for export

♦ Facilitated the uplifting and the development of new standards for fish and fishery products with market potential.

### **Committee on Poultry, Livestock and Feed Crops**

♦ Recommended the extension of ACEF utilization beyond 2007.

♦ Urged to strengthen Quezon City Veterinary Office to ensure vigilance against incidence of hog cholera and other diseases.

♦ Pushed for approval of the guidelines on Good Animal Husbandry

♦ Encouraged adequate supply of Liquid nitrogen for artificial insemination in the livestock sector.

### **Agriculture and Fishery Mechanization Committee**

♦ Discussed the proposed strengthening of AFMEC and rename it to AFMIC to give focus not only on agri and fishery machinery but infrastructure as well

♦ Revisited the drying technology transfer program of the government.

♦ Conducted the 3 Public Consultations on the 12 standards for slaughterhouse equipment for hogs.

♦ Facilitated the conduct of seminar on Constructor Performance Evaluator (CPEs) for DA projects evaluators.

## ***DRAFT GUIDES, from page 4***



PARTICIPANTS IN THE AGRIBUSINESS FORUM alternately listened and voiced their reactions to the proposed guidelines on agribusiness investments in the country.

under the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan, whether they are part of developed titled properties, and whether they are covered by the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program. Addressing the issues, Usec Fondevilla said these shall be clarified through monitoring. The other issues raised were the

of 1000 hectares for lease agreements as set out in RA 7900, constitutional limitations on agri investments in so far as land ownership and control is concerned, possible violation of the suspension of implementation of Philippine-PROC agreements in Negros Island, need for concrete monitoring and evaluation of the



2KR Meeting :This photo shows officials of the Department of Agriculture (DA), the Embassy of Japan, (EOJ), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Japan International Cooperation System (JICA) National Economic & Development Authority and National Agricultural & Fishery Council (NAFC) during the Annual Japan 2KR Consultative Committee Meeting held at the NEDA sa Pasig on November 9, 2007. The purpose of this annual meeting was to review the past and the most recent Japan 2KR tranche received by the Government of the Philippines. NAFC Executive Director, Atty. Bernie G. Fondevilla reported the status of delivery and use of fertilizer under the latest tranche and its contribution to the country's food production and the deposit of the peso proceeds and its utilization.

## ***ADR trainees, from page 6***

Employment Administration (POEA). The training pursued the provisions of Executive Order 523 which institutionalized the use of ADR in the Executive Department. The ADR program was instituted to aid government in creating, installing and implementing alternative processes in resolving conflicts and disputes in and out of the agencies for the purpose of providing a speedy and durable option for both internal clients and the general public. The EO also directed agencies to

ensure its implementation by having at least two ADR specialist in their staff.

On November 15, the NAFC trainees participated in the national observance of the International Conflict Resolution Day in Malacanang. Along with 248 others, they were recognized as trained government mediators. Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, who was the guest of honor, said the Philippines "promotes awareness of the ADR processes and non-adversarial approaches to resolving conflicts".

programs, and strengthening ecological measures for the Chinese investment projects.

Statements of support for the implementation of the signed agreements, and for Chinese investments, were likewise expressed.

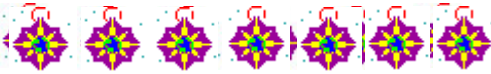
For his part, Region X Agriculture and Fishery Council Chairperson Edwin Andot suggested that similar consultations be conducted at the local level.

### **Next steps**

Delivering the final word during the forum, Usec

Fondevilla advised the participants to continue to examine the draft guideline and send further feedback to the DA, through Asec Javelosa. He further urged the body to attend the next consultation on the subject which will be announced in January 2008. The forum participants included representatives from private agribusiness companies and organizations, regional AFCs, convergence agencies DA, DAR and DENR, advocacy organizations, and the academe.





## Social mobilization training rolls on in SoCCSKSarGen

After some lull due to budget difficulties, the NAFC's social mobilization training program, which aims to foster a wide array of knowledge and skills in participatory development in all regions and provinces nationwide, went on stream again.

Members of the NAFC's social mobilization core team conducted the training in Tantangan, South Cotabato for agency partners in SoCCSKSarGen and North Cotabato. Held from Aug. 22-24, it involved 27 trainees, 17 females and 10 males, from both the private and government sectors.

The participants included municipal agricultural and fishery council (AFC) chairs, commodity sector chairs of the provincial and municipal AFCs, leaders of rural-based organizations, Department of Agriculture Regional Field Unit XII staff, and staff of municipal



NAFC's Ms. Conchita S. del Rosario in animated lecture on one of the components of social mobilization in Region XII.

and provincial agricultural offices.

In a report to ED Bernie G. Fondevilla, the NAFC training team, composed of Ms. Conchita S. del Rosario, Mr. Pete Dumaraos and Mr. Benjamin Donor, said "the participants expressed their willingness to carry out the social mobilization activities in their respective area."

They also identified three trainees with the potential to act as trainers. They are Mr.

Dionisio D. Bautista, Sultan Kudarat PAFC chairperson; Mr. Leo A. Loreda, Pigcawayan, North Cotabato MAFC chairperson; and Ms. Julayja V. Tobias, RAFC XII treasurer. "They expressed their commitment to act as trainers or resource persons in future NAFC-initiated training," the NAFC team added. The training consisted of the following topics: people-centered development, creating the spirit of community among the AFCs, volunteerism, leadership, building social capital, networking and alliance building, team building and

development, and building commitment.

The social mobilization training is intended to be cascaded down to the provincial and municipal levels. The training was organized by DA-RFU XII and the Agricultural Training Institute based in Tantangan. Mr. Nasser Modin, DA-RFU XII operations chief and Ms. Virginia Manuel of the Shariff Kabunsuan Provincial Agricultural Office, who were trained in social mobilization along with the NAFC core team members, acted as resource persons in the training.

### AFC-LGU Engagement in Region XII



SOUTH COTABATO PAFC Chairperson Felipe Uy meets with Surallah, South Cotabato Mayor Romulo S. Solivio and his municipal agricultural officer, Hermie S. Labordo. They discussed the proposed central market "bagsakan" that is proposed to be established in Surallah. Engaging officials in discussion over local development affairs, specially as they relate to the prospect of agriculture and fisheries, is one of the key duties of AFC officers and members.

## Staff trains in alternative dispute resolution

Two NAFC employees have completed a training in alternative dispute resolution (ADR), which seeks to provide the participants with the knowledge and skills for alternative processes in resolving conflicts in and outside the agency.

Ms. Diosile G. Arida, acting chief of the Finance and Administrative Division, and Ms. Susan Puentebella, chief of the Commercial Crop Section of



Beside Prof. Anabelle Abaya (3rd from right) and Guest of Honor Secretary Edmundo Ermita (fourth from right) joined the other guests for the ADR graduation rites.

the Agricultural Support and Coordination Division, attended and completed the

course which was held from September 10 to 28, 2007.

Conducted under the auspices of the Office of the

President, the training was administered by The CoRE Group, a non-stock foundation headed by Professor Annabelle Abaya. It consisted of 40 hours of classroom lectures and exercises, including role playing, case discussion and other group activities; and 40 hours of mentored practice involving real-world cases in the Philippine Overseas

(see ADR trainees, page 5)

## Loyalty incentives handed out

Thirty-seven NAFC employees were awarded recognition and monetary reward for their loyalty to the agency. They marked their 15<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup>, 35<sup>th</sup> and 40<sup>th</sup> year as regular employees of the agency up to April 30 this year.

The service awardees are as follows:

**40 years:** Angelito V. Samson.

**35 years:** Dolores O. Rafa; Melba P. Amurao;

Inocencio S. Ballesteros, Jr.; Gregorio A. Sta. Juana; Crescencia B. Begonia; Romeo P. Ladao.

**30 years:** Laurence G. Macaraeg ; Maria Luz A. Enriquez; Mario C. Mendoza; Pepito A. Reyes; Lorna B. Abreu; Carlito P. Fernandez; Celeste C. Villena.

**25 years:** Atanacia P. Coronel; Gil M. Bayot; Irene I. Camba; Alexander S. Daroya; Juliet E. Oplencia; Agapita T. Agustin; Maria Riza L.

Pamplona; Evelyn A. Barrientos.

**20 years:** Bernardo A. Abejar; Job M. Evio.

**15 years:** Celso R. Mateo, Jr.; Braulio B. Castro, Jr.; Merlyn R. Galdonez; Pilar R. de Luna; Conchita S. del Rosario; Carlos F. Pangilinan Estrella V. Tulay; Recto R. Villamayor; Catherine A. Viray; Michael Rey C. Lazaro; Troadio U Montemayor ; Jeanet J. Dubria; and Mercedita B. Cueto.



Angelito V. Samson receives his incentive from NAFC ED Fondevilla for his 40 years of loyal service to the agency.

## NAFC hosts DA team-building activity

September 21 was an "Affair to Remember in September" for DA family staff who attended the team-building activity hosted by the NAFC.

Dressed in either red or black, members of the DA family savored "the atmosphere of romantic, semi-formal mood" brought on by a set of activities conceptualized and implemented by creative NAFC staff who comprised the



ad hoc working group for the event.

The dusk-to-midnight event consisted of dancing

sessions and lessons, live-band performance, games and raffles, dinner and cocktails.

Above are some of the highlights of the "unforgettable" event.

## DA, NAFC staff gets free vaccines, medical tests

Two free medical services were provided NAFC and DA staff on the initiative of the NAFC Employees Association President Pete Ladao and Local

Support and Coordination Staff Officer Ms. Emee Mayor.

From July 15-16, 42 NAFC staff underwent free random blood sugar (RBS),

electrocardiograph and cholesterol assessment. The tests, sponsored by Abbot Laboratories and Pfizer, were conducted by DA's medical clinic head, Dr. Mary Paz Joy V. Lati and Nurse Leslie Fabul, in coordination with Ms. Mayor. Dr. Arnel Nepomuceno of the Quezon City General Hospital interpreted the ECG results for the staff.

On Oct. 30, 340 NAFC and DA employees availed themselves of free anti-flu

vaccination at the Apacible Hall. The vaccine immunizes the employees against influenza for at least one year. The medical service was supported by Glovax Philippines, in cooperation with the Rotary Club of Pasay North, Meningo Organization Foundation and the National Institute of Health. It was coordinated by the NAFCEA, thru Mr. Ladao. The vaccination was preceded by a presentation on meningococemia, a dreaded disease.





# Changes in GMA dryers program mullied

Stakeholders have raised concerns about the mechanical dryer component of the Ginintuang Masaganang Ani program in one of the side events of the recently conducted 5<sup>th</sup> National Grains Conference.

In a report to ED Fondevilla, NAFC representatives in the conference Ms. Juliet Opulencia and Engr. Francia Macalintal, said the issues raised were as follows: flat bed dryers are not efficient in some areas, recirculating dryers retrofitted with rice hull furnace are more acceptable to farmers in different places, and

therefore, provision of the assistance should depend on the farmers' choice or need.

These concerns were articulated during a dialogue with heads of member-agencies of the Philippine Rice Production Consortium (PRPC).

Immediately responding to the concern, Philippine Rice Research Institute Director Dr. Leo Sebastian said the concerns will be taken up during the next GMA planning session.

The grains conference was organized around the theme: biomass utilization for profitability. There were 200



**A FLATBED DRYER**

participants coming from the DA agencies, including the regional field units, state universities and colleges, local government units, farmers organizations, rice milling industry, agricultural machinery and equipment manufacturers, and financing institutions.

In his speech, DA Secretary Arthur C. Yap emphasized the importance of an alliance of primary institutions concerned with rice production research and extension to address the problems of the grains industry.

## US Ambassador Kenney visits DA



US Ambassador Kristie Kenney visited the DA on November 29. She was briefed on on-going US-assisted programs and projects implemented by the DA by Undersecretary and NAFC ED Bernie G. Fondevilla (right photo). She also discussed new projects proposed for US funding. With Secretary Arthur C. Yap (at left photo), she led the ceremonial opening of the DA Exporters' Showroom featuring food exports, a marketing tack that aims to boost government's initiative to widen overseas markets for local farm produce.

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