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INAUGURAL HARVEST

Indonesia makes breakthrough in SL-8SHS hybrid seed production

Indonesia's agriculture agency, the PT Sang Hyang Seri (Persero) has made a "breakthrough" in rice seeds production using the SL-8SHS hybrid seeds variety of SL Agritech Corp., a TV network in Indonesia reported over the weekend.

An official of SL Agritech said the report was made during the inaugural harvest of the SL-8SHS hybrid seeds at the PT Sang Hyang Seri's 242-hectare farm in Sukamandi, Indonesia. The occasion was attended by officials of the state-run agriculture agency headed by Director Eddy Budonio.

"Now that we have tried this SL-8SHS hybrid seeds variety from SL Agritech, our seed production has increased dramatically to 4.6 MT. And for this, we are truly very, very happy," he said.

SL Agritech Corp., the leading producer in the Philippines

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Taken during the inaugural harvest of SL-8SHS hybrid rice seeds attended by officials of Indonesia's PT Sang Hyang Seri (Persero).

DOÑA MARIA JASPONICA

SL Agritech premium rice gaining wide acceptance

The Doña Maria Jasponica, a premium rice produced by SL Agritech Corp. is fast becoming a very popular local brand because of its fragrant aroma and exceptional eating quality.

"Talagang ibang-iba ang lasa at masasabi kong comparable sa imported quality rice which is more expensive. I have tasted it once and since then, I never tried to buy other kind of rice in the market," said Dr. Santiago Obien, former executive director of the Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice).

Another quality rice produced by SL Agritech that has a growing following from local consumers is the Doña Maria Miponica. Aside from its exceptional eating quality, it is also blessed with the unique texture of Milagrosa rice.

The two rice variants, named in honor of the mother of Henry Lim, chairman and CEO of SL Agritech Corp., combine the fragrant aroma of Jasmine Rice and the excellent eating

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gintong butil

PARA SA MGA MAGSASAKA

Pa-raffle ng SL Agritech may papremyong TRIP TO HONGKONG, atbp.

Ni MINA CRUZ

'...para mapalaganap ang pagtatanim ng hybrid rice sa buong bansa.'

Magandang balita sa mga magsasaka sa buong bansa na nagtatanim ng SL-8 hybrid rice.

Ang SL Agritech Corp., pinakamalaking prodyuser ng hybrid seeds sa bansa, ay may malalaking papremyong nakalaan katulad ng hand tractor, rice thresher at water pump, sa sino mang magsasaka na bibili ng punlang hybrid sa nasabing kumpanya.

Sinabi ni Josephine Dungca, marketing manager ng SL Agritech Corp. na sa bawa't pagbili (seed reservation) ng 20-kilong SL-8H hybrid seeds sa halagang P2,500, ay makatatanggap ng limang raffle tickets, at sa paunang bayad na P500 siya ay tatanggap lamang ng isang raffle ticket.

Pinamagatang "Entrada, Arangkada ng SL-8H (Papremyo sa Tag-araw)," ang promong ito ay sinimulan pa noong Agosto 25 at ito ay magwawakas sa katapusan ng Setyembre sa taong ito. Ang raffle draw ay gaganapin sa Department of Agriculture sa Elliptical Road sa Diliman, Quezon City.

Sinabi ni Ms. Dungca na nilunsad ng SL Agritech ang nasabing promo "para mapalaganap ang pagtatanim ng hybrid rice sa buong bansa."

"Marami na ring magsasaka sa bansa na nagtatanim at gumagamit ng SL-8 hybrid rice ang mayayaman na sa ngayon. Ito ay dahil na rin sa napatunayan nila mismo sa kanilang karanasan na ang pagtatanim ng hybrid rice ay talagang nakakapagparami at nakapagpapalaki ng kanilang ani at kita," sabi ni Ms. Dungca.

Sinabi niyang napapansin ng kanyang tanggapan ang lumalaking pangangailangan ng mga magsasaka sa binhing SL hybrid rice. "Ayaw na nila kasi na magtanim ng inbred rice dahil ang katwiran nila, hanggang 70-80 cabanes lamang kada isang ektarya ang kanilang dati-rating inaani. Samantalang sa hybrid rice, wika nila, mahigit 200 cabanes kada ektarya ang kanilang inaani, " dugtong pa ni Dungca.

(Sundan sa pahina 10)

Dr. Sebastian looks back at 'rice mission'

DR. SEBASTIAN

Retired Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice) Executive Director Leocadio S. Sebastian said yesterday he has realized more deeply, following his early retirement from the government service last July 4, "that there is something in government service that is far more compelling than power or money."

"I have seen a cause worth pursuing that is bigger than life itself. It is the cause of making our rice farmers beam with smiles; of helping mothers ensure that there is enough rice meal after meal; of enabling our farmers to earn income for their children's needs and education; and of contributing to national peace and economic prosperity through the rice science that you, the rice Research and Development (R&D) and I know best," he said.

In a letter to the Philippine Agricultural Journalists (PAJ), Dr. Sebastian, who was replaced in an acting capacity by PhilRice deputy executive director for administration Ronilo Beronio, thanked the PAJ "for all the support, cooperation and friendship that I have relished in my almost eight years as PhilRice executive director."

"I have always felt proud, as I am pleased, of what we have achieved through collaboration and partnership to push forward Philippine rice R&D toward excellence. As I leave the portals of PhilRice, one lasting impression I am bringing out with me is a clear vision of dedicated men and women – the workforce that helped me hurdle and turn challenges into opportunities."

Sebastian also enjoined PhilRice employes and officials to bestow the same privilege to Beronio, a lawyer, and to whoever President Arroyo would appoint as head of the agency. He also expressed high hopes that whoever will lead PhilRice, "will carry on the zeal of rice R&D excellence, which the Institute is known for."

PhilRice is a government corporate entity attached to the Department of Agriculture (DA). It was created through Executive Order No. 1061 in November, 1985 to help develop high-yielding and cost-reducing rice technologies.

Its main offices are located at the Science City of Munoz, Nueva Ecija. It has a network of 57 agencies and 70 seed centers strategically located nationwide.

EDITORIAL STAFF

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SANNY GALVEZ
Editor-in-Chief

JOSEPHINE E. DUNGCA
Managing Editor

Contributing Editors:

Rudy A. Fernandez
Conrad Cariño
Dr. Sosimo Ma. Pablico
Jennifer Ng

Carmina Cruz
Jivin Relato
Graphic Artists

Viktor Penas
Carlo Caluag
Photographers

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sanny galvez

golden grain

Media indifference

The key to increased agricultural production is still the farmers "at wala ng iba," according to our good friend, Mart del Rosario, a journalist and a retired advertising and PR executive.

He said any agricultural development daw remains ineffective and may even aggravate social discontent "if the problems of the small farmers are not solved."

Ito ang pinag-giitan niyang ipinaliwanag sa amin noong nakaraang "Commonwealth Caucus" na dinadaluhan tuwing Friday morning (starts at 10 a.m.) ng mga dati at kasalukuyang newspaper editors, columnists and reporters at former PR practitioners, sa Hawaiian coffee shop at the Ever Gotesco Shopping Mall in Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon City.

A native of Bocaue, Bulacan, Mart, looking young and strong at… ah, never mind, noted that small farmers, whose major source of income, he said, is farming, and who share the common problem of having limited land and low income, "usually supplement their income with earnings from other farm-based occupations such as poultry and gardening."

"Ganito pa rin ang sitwasyon hanggang sa kasalukuyan ng ating mga magsasaka. But this situation must be viewed from a wider perspective – from the viewpoint of the lowly farmers who have long been crying for an honest-to-goodness government assistance in the form of easy credit, accessible farm-to-market roads and other such assistance that will improve their status in life," he said.

-o0o-

Ang sinabi naman ng kasama at kaibigan rin nating si Ely Cinco, who writes a column for the Manila Bulletin every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 'yun daw nakalipas na "rice crisis" is a wake-up call for the government to help improve the plight of our farmers."

Ang mabilis ko namang sagot: "Ang problema lang Ely, baka ring na ng ring ang telepono, tulog na tulog naman yung sasagot!"

Dugtong naman ni Max Ballesteros, formerly the director for public affairs of the Food Terminal, Inc. (FTI) and chief of the mass media division of the National Food Authority (NFA): "Hanggang hindi natitigil ang pag-iimport natin ng bigas sa ibang bansa, na ginagastusan natin ng halos o mahigit P30 bilyones kada taon, hindi maibibigay ng ating pamahalaan ang tunay na tulong sa ating mga magsasaka. Kabaliktaran nga ang nangyayari, dahil sa ka-iimport natin, we are actually subsidizing foreign rice farmers."

-o0o-

The Manila Bulletin and the Philippine Star have been running a regular weekly page each for agriculture for many years now. Two other papers used to run a page each but not until they decided to print more business and sports stories.

For an agricultural country like the Philippines, it is indeed ironic that our mass media pay little attention to news about agriculture. Most of today's newspapers print nothing about farming except perhaps when a top agriculture official receives an award or delivers a speech.

Indonesia makes breakthrough in SL-8SHS hybrid seed production

(From page 1)

of the high-yielding hybrid rice seed varieties, exported late last year a total of 550 MT of its SL-8SHS seeds to Indonesia. And again this year, it exported 750 MT of the same seed variety to that country as part of its efforts to accelarate growth in its rice production.

With a population of 230 million, Indonesia, which is one of the world's biggest rice consuming countries, envision to plant up to five million hectares of hybrid rice in the next five years.

Harvestime at the PT Sang Hyang Seri rice farm in Sukamandi, Indonesia.

(From page 1)

quality of Japanese rice. When cooked, the grains achieve a soft, sticky and chewy texture enhanced further by its aroma," Lim said.

"I am very proud of the fact that the Doña Maria rice brand is now becoming very popular among housewives. It is also being patronized by big hotels and restaurants," Lim said, adding that Dona Maria grains are timely harvested, thus the maturity and fullness of the grains are export-quality guaranteed.

Sold in vacuum-sealed packs of two, five, 10 and 25 kilos in leading groceries and supermarkets, Doña Maria Jasponica is much cheaper than imported Thailand and Japanese rice.

DOÑA MARIA JASPONICA

SL Agritech premium rice gaining wide acceptance

"To be more affordable to people and also because of the clamor of more and more housewives who have developed some sort of addiction to our rice products--the Doña Maria Jasponica, Miponica and Jasponica brown-- we are also making available in vacuum-sealed packs of 300 grams these three products in the market," he said.

One of those who have commended the exceptional eating quality of Doña Maria Jasponica and Doña Maria Miponica, is former Food Minister and National Food Authority (NFA) Administrator Jesus Tanchanco.

He said: "Dahil sa ang mga ito ay pawang mga produkto ng ating bansa, nararapat lamang nating tangkilikin through which, we will actually be helping local hybrid farmers and saving for our country precious dollars from importation of quality rice."

Perfect for every occasion

Filipinos, being the second happiest people in Asia, are sociable and party-lovers, with food as the center of many celebrations. There are also a lot of events related to food such as, birthdays, weddings, baptismal, fiestas, Noche Buena, and Medya Noche. But none of these events will be the same without... rice!

Rice is the main staple food of Filipinos, so much so that to them, no meal will be considered complete without it. Although it can be found almost anywhere, only one brand of rice stands out amongst the crowd--the Doña Maria Premium Rice. Invading supermarkets nationwide, Doña Maria Premium Rice will surely make you stop on your feet as you smell its delicious aromatic fragrance.

The Doña Maria Premium Rice has been promoting its three variants: Jasponica, Jasponica Brown, and Miponica by conducting sampling activities in different supermarkets in Metro Manila and Cebu, as well as participating in different food exhibits such as IFEX (International Food Expo), MAFBEX (Manila Food and Beverage Expo), WOFEX (World Food Expo), and the Pinoy Exporter's Fair held at theWorld Trade Center and SM Megatrade Hall.

Grown only in the choicest farmlands, the Doña Maria Premium Rice is indeed gaining recognition for its taste, smell and quality from consumers everywhere. At an event, a consumer commented that it was the only rice her children eat. While others said, "Ang bango ah!" (it smells good). "Malambot nga talaga siya!" (it really is soft), "Pwede pang mga Japanese dishes!" (it can be used to make Japanese dishes).

From Filipino to Chinese to Japanese dishes, Doña Maria Premium Rice is the perfect rice for every occassion.

The Best Tasting Rice in the Philippines ...Probably the Whole World!

Doña Maria®

PREMIUM RICE

PROTEIN & ENERGY PACKED!

JASPONICA

Naturally fragrant with a deliciously soft texture, Doña Maria Jasponica variety combines the wonderful aroma of Jasmine rice and the excellent eating quality of Japanese rice. Ideal for fried rice, garlic rice, or just plain rice, Jasponica Rice is a standout in every meal.

Miponica

Glutinous and fluffy, Doña Maria Miponica variety is blessed with the unique texture of Milagrosa rice and the exceptional eating quality of Japanese rice. Ideal for sushi, paella, and risotto, Miponica Rice is the perfect choice for exquisite rice dishes.

JASPONICA Brown

Rich in nutrients such as Fiber, Magnesium, Selenium, Vitamin B1, B3, and B6, Doña Maria helps you become fit while enjoying the nutty flavor and chewy texture of its Jasponica Brown variety.

(Available in 2kg, 5kg, 10kg and 25kg pack)

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STERLING PLACE, 2302 Pasong Tamo Ext., Makati City 1231, Phil.
Tel. no.: (632) 813-7828 loc. 533/534
Telefax: (632) 888-4791
Website:http://www.sl-agritech.com

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Left photo shows Henry Lim, chairman and CEO of SL Agritech Corp., being interviewed by Baby O'brien over NBN Channel 4, and Twink Macaraig (right photo) of Channel 21 ANC Prime News, on hybrid rice production. In both interviews, Lim underscored the importance of producing hybrid rice which, he said, will move our country towards economic prosperity. SL Agritech Corp. is the country's leading producer of the well-known SL-8 hybrid rice seeds.

ONCE UPON A TIME, RP WAS DUBBED

'THE RICE GRANARY OF ASIA'

By SANNY GALVEZ

Definitely, the Philippines cannot be totally dependent on foreign sources of food (we mean rice). Taking the world supply of cereals for example, statistics show that of the total quantity of the world's cereal production, only four percent is being traded. This means that should there be a slight decrease in the world's cereals production even by just five percent, many countries would be adversely affected.

The Philippines serves as Asia's- and perhaps the world's center for research on the best scientific methods of rice production. Since 1985 and almost every year thereafter, however, the Philippines has always been importing rice spending billions of pesos every year. What is ironic about this is that once upon a time, the Philippines was dubbed "the rice granary of Asia".

Henry Lim, chairman & Chief Executive officer (CEO) of SL Agritech Corp., has emphasized in several interviews, that the hybrid rice technology is one of the key technologies that can make the Philippines self-sufficient in rice.

"Hybrid rice technology is one of the keys that can make our country self-sufficient in rice. In China, more than 60 percent of its ricelands are planted to hybrid rice. With over 1.3 billion people to feed, China is not only self-sufficient in rice but it has also enough for export," he said.

Kayang-kaya natin maging self-sufficient sa bigas sa pamamagitan ng pagtatanim ng hybrid rice na tatlong doble halos ang laki ng inaani kumpara sa ordinary rice variety na itinatanim pa rin ng ibang magsasaka," he said, adding that is firm is increasing the production of its SL-8H hybrid rice variety to cope with the demand of farmers.

Last year, he said his firm exported 550 metric tons(MT) of SL-8SHS seeds to Indonesia as part of its efforts to accelerate growth of its rice production. And again early this year, it exported 750 MT of the same variety to that country which, he said, has millions of hectares of potential rice lands that will be planted to hybrid rice.

Jesus T. Tanchanco, former food minister and administrator of the National Food Authority (NFA) , expressed optimism that the Philippines "will again be an exporter of rice if the country will go all out on hybrid."

He lamented that the government is spending no less than P30 billion every year because of rice importation.

"Gastusin na lang ito sa pagpapagawa ng mga irigasyon, farm to market roads, pagpapagamit ng mga post-harvest facilities at mahabang pautang sa mga magsasaka,"he said.

Is hybrid rice the answer to the country's cereal supply problem?

"Yes," said farmers from Sto. Domingo, Nueva Ecija who have been planting the high-yielding rice seed variety the past years and who believe in the latest farming technology.

"Totoong medyo malaki ang gastos sa pagtatanim ng hybrid pero mas malaki naman ang ani at kita naming kumpara nga sa pagtatanim ng traditional o inbred rice variety," they said.

According to them, their groups have been planting the SL 8H hybrid rice seed variety the past years and that their rice yield has greatly increased from an average of 70 cavans per hectare (planting the inbred or traditional rice variety) to 180 or 10 metric tons (MT) per hectare.

Philippine Fuhua Sterling Agricultural Corp. starts planting hybrid corn in Isabela

The Philippine Fuhua Sterling Agricultural Technology Development Corp. (PFSATDC) has started planting hybrid corn on a 200-hectare farm in Bgy. Delfin Albano, Isabela, as part of its programmed production of highly-promising grain variety and construction of infrastructure facilities all over the country.

Henry Lim Bon Liong, PFSATDC president, said in June 2006, the Fuhua Group, based in Jilin province in China which owns the world's second largest corn processing facility and supplies 60 percent of China's large corn requirement, signed an agrement with SL Agritech whereby the Fuhua Group will invest $5 billion in the Philippines for the production of hybrid corn and hybrid sorghum and construction of farm facilities. He said the first of such facility was constructed last year at the four-hectare farm site at the Sterling Technopark in Silang, Cavite.

Lim said that the signing of the memorandum of agreement between the Fuhua Group of China and SL Agritech Corp. "is a momentous event which signals the start of the huge project that would contribute much to the enhancement of Philippine agriculture."

One of the farm machines used in the PFSATDC corn project.

Part of the 200-hectare corn field in Bgy. Delfin Albano in Isabela.

The signing ceremony was witnessed by Chinese Ambassador to the Philippines Li Jinjun, then Presidential Management Staff Chief and now Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap, then Agriculture Secretary Domingo F. Panganiban, Rep. Edwin Uy, Minister Du Quinglin of the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture, and Joy Tan of the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chamber of Commerce.

The Isabela hybrid corn project, which is under the supervision of Zhu Tianwen, has a total workforce of 12 Chinese nationals including 25 Filipinos.

Using an overhead irrigation equipment.

Before its development to a corn field.

Nueva Ecija farmers' co-op is a strong advocate and promoter of SL-8H hybrid rice production

Mang Carding while being interviewed by Cecil Lardizabal of ABS-CBN at his rice farm in Bgy. Tabacao, Nueva Ecija.

By Dr. SOSIMO MA. PABLICO

The Nagkakaisang Magsasaka Agricultural Primary Multi-Purpose Cooperative (NMAP-MPC) in Barangay Tabacao, Talavera, Nueva Ecija started in 1989 with only P30,000 but after 19 years, its total assets have ballooned to P56 million.

More importantly, the co-op has become a strong promoter and advocate of SL-8H hybrid rice production.

Its chairman, Ricardo "Carding" P. Buenaventura, relates that some members of the co-op started to plant commercial hybrid rice in 2001 using Bigante, the variety of Bayer Crop Science. In the 2004-2005 dry season, however, the members finally decided to dump Bigante and changed it with SL-8, the first variety of SL Agritech. That was after representatives of the seed company led by Gani Gamiao conducted a technology demonstration in 2003-2004 dry season and a series of meetings with the officers of the co-op.

Performance of SL-8H

The techno demo enabled the co-op members to see for themselves the performance of SL-8H. Carding and Santiago dela Cruz, co-op vice chairman, said many of their members were so impressed on the yield of the variety in the techno demo, that they no longer needed much thinking when SL Agritech offered a dealership for the co-op. Earlier however, the members refused to use SL-8H because they had not yet seen its performance.

In the first season, the NMAP-MPC sold a total 370 bags of SL-8 seeds. Each bag weights 20 kg. and is good for one hectare. Thus, in the first season alone, the co-op was already instrumental in promoting the production of the new hybrid variety in 370 hectares. According to Gamiao, the co-op received a rebate of P100 per bag. This means that it earned a total of P37,000.

> Carding recalls that his wife was smiling all the time when they were about to harvest their first SL-8H crop. She was very happy because of the bright prospect of a high yield.

Carding clarified, however, that the co-op members planted only over one-half of the seeds because some of them were not yet fully convinced of the variety even if they already saw its performance. The members planted more than 200 hectares. The rest of the seeds went to farmer in adjoining barangays like Basang Hamog and Tagaytay.

Happy About Their Decision

Indeed, the innovators were too happy about their decision to plant SL-8H because they obtained high yield.

For instance, Carding harvested a total 1,440 bags (fresh from the thresher with a moisture content of 18 to 20 percent) from eight hectares. This means that his average yield was 180 bags per hectare.

On the other hand, Santiago, 54, was even happier as he harvested 248 bags from 1.2 hectares or an average of 206.67 bags per hectare. He could have planted a wider area if only he has a large farm like Carding's.

Carding recalls that his wife was smiling all the time when they were about to harvest their first SL-8H crop. She was happy because of the bright prospect of a high yield, he said.

In general, the average yield of SL-8H in Tabacao that season was 180 bags per hectare.

Co-op Production Area Increases

In the 2005-2006 dry season, the co-op more than doubled its sale of SL-8 seeds. It sold 820 bags. The members planted almost 200 hectares and the remaining seeds were sold to interested farmers in the adjoining barangays. Amazingly, the average yield even jumped to 190 bags per hectare to the delight of the adopters.

Because of this development, the volume sold by the co-op further increased to 1,000 bags of seeds in the 2007 dry season as more and more farmers got interested in the variety. Of this volume, 410 bags went to the members who still got an average yield of 190 bags per hectare.

For this year's dry season, the co-op's volume of sale still increased to 1,376 bags as it even supplied SL-8 seeds to farmers from the towns of Gen. Natividad,

(Turn to page 9)

SL-8H

Super Hybrid Rice Seeds

Kaagapay sa Buhay ng mga Magsasaka.

Nueva Ecija farmers' coop, a strong advocate and promoter of SL-8 hybrid rice production

(From page 7)

Llanera and Rizal. The members also planted almost 400 bags.

According to Carding and Santiago, in Tabacao, co-op members plant almost all of their farms with SL-8 during the dry season. Carding alone planted 17 hectares of SL-8 and SL-7, an aromatic hybrid. Amazingly, despite the threat of disease infestation, he harvested 138 bags of SL-7 a hectare last wet season, which is still higher than the yield of inbred (75 to 100 bags per hectare).

Only a few planted hybrid rice during the wet season for fear that their crops might be infected by the dreaded bacterial leaf blight disease. One co-op member, according to Santiago, planted SL-8 last wet season and harvested an average of 115 bags per hectare.

Seeds Taken From DA

In 2006 wet season, only about 15 hectares were planted to SL-8, according to Gamiao. Seeds were taken from the Department of Agriculture Regional Field Unit. Even when the co-op already became an SL Agritech distributor in 2007 wet season, only 30 hectares were planted to this hybrid variety in Tabacao.

Exactly 1,250 bags of SL-8 seeds were delivered to the co-op, but almost all the seeds were sold to farmers outside the co-op. The distributorship agreement, however, lasted for only one season, and the co-op reverted to being a dealer.

While the income that could be derived under the distributorship scheme P225 a bag) would be higher than the rebate (P100 a bag) in the dealership, the risk involved is too high. Under the dealership agreement, the scheme is plant now, pay later. On the other hand, under the distributorship scheme, the co-op has to pay for any delivery after 30 to 60 days. The co-op management was afraid payments for seeds delivered to other groups might not be collected within that period.

Co-op Buys All Produce

Carding and Santiago said the co-op buys all the harvest of the members, especially from those who have no solar dryer.

They explained that before the harvest season, the board of directors of the co-op conferred to peg a buying price for the next harvest. The price is usually higher by P0.25 to P0.50 per kg., higher than whatever the rice mills would offer.

The members normally bring their harvest to the co-op where the grains are dried and stored before these are sold to ricemillers at a time when they have practically nothing to mill anymore. In this way, business would be more profitable.

However, Carding said that traders and ricemillers refused to buy their harvest primarily because they did not know the variety. Besides, this kind of businessmen can make farmers bankrupt if the latter are not wary. The co-op management was told there was no price for their grains and, hence, was offered a low price. If they took the bait, the co-op should be gone by now.

"When they (the millers) had almost nothing to mill anymore, they bought our grains at P13/kg, which was way above the current buying price then of P11.50 to P12.50/kg.," Carding said.

On the other hand, the co-op has no problem on palay drying as it has mechanical dryers. Moreover, its storage space is more than sufficient for its palay trading operations, and it has also a mini-cono ricemill.

DA intensifies palay buying program

The Department of Agriculture (DA) is increasing its palay procurement volume this wet or main crop to 500,000 metric tons (MT) to further beef up the government's buffer stocks.

SEC. YAP

Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap said the procurement volume target for this wet crop is 1,460 percent higher than the 32,044 MT of palay that the National Food Authority (NFA) managed to buy from farmers during the same period last year.

Sec. Yap said NFA is targeting to buy 10 million 50-kilogram bags of palay, equivalent to 500,000 tons until the end of the year.

NFA Administrator Jessup Navarro said that upon the instructions of President Arroyo and Secretary Yap, the agency is implementing an incentive program to encourage farmers to sell their produce to NFA at the government support price of P17 a kilo or an increase of P5 per kilo.

Navarro said under this new project, NFA will give a bonus of P1,800 for every 50 cavans of palay that farmers will sell to the food agency in the coming harvest period.

"This P1,800 bonanza is enough to buy one bag of chemical fertilizer, a vital palay production input, and will thus help farmers cope with the ever spiraling production costs arising from the continued increase in oil prices.

Navarro said the NFA will buy clean and dry palay with 14 percent moisture content and 95 percent purity at P17 per kilo.

Pa-raffle ng SL Agritech may papremyong TRIP TO HONGKONG, atbp.

(Mula sa pahina 12)

Ang mga papremyo sa nasabing pa-raffle ay makikita sa gawing kanan sa pahinang ito.

Sa mga magwawaging magsasaka na bumili ng binhing palay sa kani-kanilang farmers' cooperatives, irrigators' associations at municipal agricultural offices (MAO), dalawa sa kanila ang may pag-asang manalo ng trip to Hongkong (ticket sa eroplano at hotel accommodation); dalawa ang mananalo ng second prize na tig-P15,000; at dalawa rin ang mananalo ng third prize na tig-P8,000.

Ang iba pang premyong nakalaan ay dalawang first prize, dalawang hand tractors; dalawang second prize, dalawang rice threshers; dalawang third prize, dalawang water pumps at 20 consolation prize, tig-isang knapsack sprayer.

First Prize	: Two winners	Hand tractor
Second Prize	: Two winners	Thresher
Third Prize	: Two winners	Water pump
Consolation Prize:	20 winners	Knapsack sprayer

Mga papremyo sa MAO, IA at Coop (sa mga magwawaging magsasaka:

First Prize : Two winners - Trip to Hongkong (airfare, hotel accommodation for one (1)
Second Prize : Two winners - P15,000 cash
Third Prize : Two winners - P 8,000 cash

Sa mga magsasakang nais sumali sa pa-raffle na ito, makipag-ugnay sa malapit sa inyong lugar na MAO, IA at sa inyong farmers' cooperative upang malaman ang iba pang detalye ng promong ito.

SA REGION VII

Target sa produksyon ng palay, may pag-asang makamit

Umaasa ang tanggapan ng Department of Agriculture (DA) sa Region VII sa Cebu na makakamit nila ang kanilang target sa produksyon ng palay sa taong ito.

Sinabi kamakailan ni Jorge Paculba, Region VII DA rice program coordinator, may 70 porsyento na ng 63,819 ektarya ang nataniman na ng palay.

"Malaki ang aming pag-asa na kung hindi kami tatamaan ng bagyo sa mga susunod na araw, makakamit namin ang aming target sa taon ito," sabi ni Paculba.

Sinabi niya na ang mga tauhan ng DA sa Region VII ay nag-umpisa nang mamahagi ng punla sa wet crop noon pang Abril dahil nga ang pagtatanim sa wet season by simula ng Mayo hanggang Octubre.

Pinuna ni Paculba na ang karamihan sa magsasaka sa nasabing rehiyon ay gumagamit pa rin ng tinatawag na 12 steps o tradisyunan na pamamaraan ng pagtatanim ng palay.

Sinabi niya na ang 63,819 ektarya na nataniman na, ay parte ng 1.25-milyung ektarya na siyang target ng pamahalaan sa pag-aani ng 10.54 milyong toneladang palay sa taniman ngayon taon na ito.

Ayon kay Dr. Frisco Malabanan, DA national coordinator of the Ginintuang Masaganang Ani (GMA) rice program, simula pa man nang kalagitnaan ng Julyo, kung saan naipamahagi ang nasabing punla sa mga magsasaka, umabot na sa 50 porsyento ng coverage target.

Sana lalo pang mapalawak ang industriya ng palay

Sa kanyang nakaraang ika-8 State of the Nation Address (SoNA), na ginanap before a joint session of Congress, nabanggit ni Pangulong Gloria Macapagal Arroyo sa isang parte ng kanyang report sa bayan ang accomplishment niya o mga nagawa niya in the area of food production and infrastructure.

Sa food production, sinabi niyang ang problema sa presyo ng bigas ay naisban ng mas malaking produksyon sa palay at price monitoring. Sinabi niyang ang halaga ng NFA rice sa kasalukuyang P18.50 per kilo ay "pinaka mababa pa rin sa rehiyon." Sa commercial rice naman, ang pinakamababa sa palenke ay P32 kada kilo.

Binanggit din ng Pangulo na mula noong 2001, ang pamahalaan ay nakapagpatayo na ng mga bagong irrigation systems para sa 146,000 ektaryang sakahan, kasama na rito ang sa Malmar sa Maguindanao at North Cotabato, Lower Agusan, Casecnan, at Aulo sa Nueva Ecija, Abulog-Apayao sa Cagayan, at Apayao, Addalam sa Quirino at Isabela.

Yung restorasyon of old systems on another 980,000 hectares ay nakapagpalaki ng irrigated land sa bansa na ngayon ay may kabuuang 1.5 milyong ektarya.

Pinahayag din ng Pangulo na ang pamahalaan ay nakapagrelease noong nakaraang taon, ng halagang P6 bilyon sa pagpapagawa ng farm-to-market roads.

Ang masasabi ko lamang, sona, or rather, sana, lalu pang palawakin ng Pangulo ang industriya ng palay para hindi na tayo import pa ng import na dahil nga dito, gumagasta ang ating bansa ng mahigit P30-bilyon taun-taon na dapat sana ay gastahin na lang sa pagpapaunlad ng nasabing industriya.

Personal na tanong ko lang, ay, hindi bale na lang.

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Tinawagan ako kamakailan ni Mr. Johnny Nunez, kaibigan ng aming boss ditong si Mr. Galvez, para magtanong kung puede siyang maging dealer ng Dona Maria Jasponica rice sa Cabanatuan. Ayon sa kanya, ang misis niya at ang kanyang mga anak ay nasarapan sa lasa ng nasabing bigas nang minsan siyang mag-uwi nito sa kanilang bahay. Nireper ko siya kay Mr. Jojo de Castro na siyang marketing manager ng Rice Division ng SL Agritech Corp. na siyang nagpoproduce ng nasabing bigas.

NANAY SOLING
na-adik sa pagtatanim ng
SL-8H hybrid rice

Kung alin mang drug na ipinagbabawal ang pag-uusapan, si Ginang Solita Serrano ng Barangay Tabacao sa Talavera, Nueva Ecija, ay masasabi nating addict na sa drug na 'yan. Nguni't kakaiba ang kanyang pagka-addict – ito ay sa pagtatanim ng SL-8H hybrid rice sa 100 ektaryang palayan na pag-aari ng kanyang pamilya.

Si Mrs. Serrano (mas kilala sa kanilang barangay na "Nanay Soling") ay isang masipag at mabait na maybahay. Nabyuda siya noon lamang isang taon. May labing-isang anak siya, walo sa kanila ay nagsisipagtrabaho sa Italy, kung kaya't siya na halos ang namamahala at nag-aasikaso sa kanilang ekta-ektaryang palayan.

Pinagtapat ni Nanay Soling na nang ang kaniyang pamilya ay mag-umpisang magsaka, limang ektarya lamang ang kanilang lupa. Nag-umpisang dumami ang kanilang sinasakahang lupa nang mag-sipag-abroad ang kaniyang mga anak.

"Lahat ng pinadadala nilang pera sa aming mag-asawa ay binibili namin ng lupa at ang tinatanim ng aking asawa ay 'yan na ring SL-8H hybrid rice. Tuwang-tuwa ako tuwing panahon ng anihan o dry season harvest dahil kung ikukumpara sa dati naming inaani (70-75 cavanes kada ektarya) ang inaani namin ngayon (160 cavanes kada ektarya) sa SL-8H, malaking hamak ang ani namin ngayon kaya't ito ng SL-8 ang lagi na naming tinatanim," masayang sabi ni Nanay Soling.

Pawang tutuo ang sinasabi ni Nanay Soling dahil may patunay siya – ang magagara nilang bahay sa Tabacao – na pinagmamapuri niya dahil na rin sa "Malaking mula sa pagtatanim naming ng SL-8H hybrid rice."

Ang kasaysaysay ni Nanay Soling ay walang pinag-iba sa mga kasaysayan ng maraming magsasaka sa iba't-ibang panig ng bansa na nagsisipagtanim din ng SL-8.

Ang ilan sa kanila na nakapagtala ng aning 344 cabanes kada ektarya ay sina Aida Badong ng Barangay San Nicolas, Baao, Camarines Sur; Fernando Gabuyo ng San Jose, Nueva Ecija na nakapag-ani ng 335 cabanes kada ektarya; Narciso Bernardez ng Bangued, Abra, 296 cabanes sa isang ektarya; Rosalie Ellasus ng San Jacinto, Pangasinan, 257; Mayor Pablo ng Umingan, Pangasinan, 240; at Felino Garcia ng Barangay Mabini, Sto. Domingo, Nueva Ecija, 260 cabanes kada ektarya.

"Kahanga-hanga talaga ang SL-8 hybrid rice," ang sambit ng magsasakang si Aida Badong nang gabing bigyan siya at ng iba pang magsasakang nakapag-ani ng mahigit 250 cabanes kada ektarya, ng parangal ng SL Agritech Corp., ang producer ng SL-8H hybrid rice seeds na pinamumunuan ni G. Henry Lim bilang chairman at chief executive officer o CEO.

SERRANO

Para lalu pang mapalaganap ang pagtatanim ng hybrid rice, ang SL Agritech Corp. ay nagdaraos ng Hybrid Rice Festivals sa iba't ibang panig ng bansa – Sa Nueva Ecija, sa Occidental Mindoro, sa Leyte, Surigao del Norte at Agusan.

Sa mga pagkakataong tulad nito, ang mga opisyales ng SL Agritech, sa pangunguna ni G. Lim, ay pinaliliwanag ang kapakinabangang natatamo sa pagtatanim ng SL-8H hybrid rice.

Kamakailan, naglabas ang tanggapan ng Ginintuang Masaganang Ani (GMA) hybrid rice program na pinangungunahan ni Dr. Frisco Malabanan, ng isang datus sa nakaraang anihan ng mga magsasakang bumubuo ng Bagong Buhay ng Mabini Multi-Purpose Cooperative (BBM-MPC).

Sa nasabing datus, pinakita dito ang kabuuang inani ng bawa't kasapi ng kooperatiba na pinangunahan ni Felino Garcia na umani noong nakaraang anihan ng 260 cabanes kada ektarya kumpara sa inani niya noong 2007 na 246.

Ang mga sumunod kay Garcia ay sina Florencio Sudoy, 237; Eduardo Garcia, 211; Maxima Pantaleon, 220; Virgilio Garcia, 207; at Elino Mata, Marciano Bautista, at Juanito Mendoza, 200 bawa't isa sa kanila.

Sa 34 na miyembro ng BBMMPC, ang average nilang ani ay 190 cavans per hectare.

Ang dati nilang inaani sa pagtatanim ng inbred rice variety ay 70 hanggang 80 cabanes lamang kada ektarya.

Ang kasaysayan ni Nanay Soling ay walang ipinagkaiba sa mga kasaysayan ng maraming magsasaka sa iba't-ibang panig ng bansa sa pagtatanim na rin ng SL-8 hybrid rice.

BADONG

BERNARDEZ

GARCIA

GABUYO