

InangLupa

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"Nurturing an inclusive, science-based, resilient & market-oriented Philippine agriculture"

InangLupa and BSWM conduct "International Year of Soils" orientation to farmers



Farmer Leaders delegation from Pozorrubio, Pangasinan visited the Bureau of Soils and Water Management Client Center and the InangLupa office. Documents were exchange between InangLupa EVP Sonny Domingo and Engr. Roger Casido, President of the Katipunan ng Samahang Magsasaka sa Pozorrubio (KASAMAPO) to promote awareness in the International Year of Soils (IYS) and objectives of InangLupa. Witnesses are from L-R. Mr. Allan Hayward, Pres. of PolyGenomX, MIAO Clarito Corpuz. Middle is Pozorrubio Mayor Artemio Chan.

The first batch of 22 farmer leaders from Pozorrubio, Pangasinan headed by their President, Engr. Roger Casido with Mayor Artemio Chan, attended the orientation on the "International Year of Soils" conducted by the Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM) in cooperation with InangLupa under its MOA to create an awareness campaign for the stakeholders and lobby with Congress to institutionalize policies and programs and push pending bills involving soil amelioration and irrigation.

They were initially briefed about the programs and projects of the BSWM and followed by a communications presentation on the IYS conducted by Global Knowledge Solutions, a volunteer organization. The communications plan spans a two-year awareness campaign that will be sustained by InangLupa under its mandate to rejuvenate and conserve the soil up to issuing kits and soil health cards to individual farmers.

The farmers after being made aware of the importance of soil enthusiastically offered to participate in the harvest festivals, mud run and other symposium on soil and offered to air its activities and modules in the community cable company at their expense if provided the materials.

continued on p3

InangLupa President Dr Dar invited to address US-Filipino Community



The US-Filipino Global Community recently invited Dr. Dar, to address their global conference and share his plans towards a better agriculture under the InangLupa Movement.

He will share his experience as a world class agriculturists and his thoughts for Philippine agricultural development.

He will re-echo his thoughts on why Philippine Agriculture needs to be improved as follows:

Food security for all

Hunger persists across the nation and while the situation has improved, the Philippines' Global Hunger Index score of 13.2 ranks 28th worldwide. How then do we feed the projected 150 million Filipinos by 2050?

Under the AEC, serious effort should go into making food security an integral part of our national agenda. The goal of becoming more food secure is a shared objective of all ASEAN member states. Given that ASEAN is home to some of the world's top agricultural exporters, every opportunity to achieve food and nutritional security must be seized.

continued on p3

Editorial

Static poverty, PRDP, and IMOD

A former IRRI (International Rice Research Institute) scientist declared that "no one can have a decent livelihood in two (2) hectares of palay farming".

It is for this reason that the poor farmer remains poor. His life is static and he could not even send his children to school. There is no other way that the poor farmer can get out of poverty.

Despite his condition as a destitute, he continues to produce palay to which Sec. Proceso J. Alcala claims in his 2012 report that never in the history of Philippine agriculture that the palay produced so much to a record level making the country almost self sufficient.

Dr. William D. Dar, a smallholder farmers' son in his book entitled, "Feeding the Forgotten Poor" wrote that the only way he was able to get out of the cycle of poverty in his family was to get education. We could not even plant tobacco as a cash crop because we could not pump out fresh water since salt water has taken over our aquifer for lack of trees in the mountains due to "kaingin". We then depended on rainfed farming where there was no profitability at all since the cost of farm inputs goes up every year.

In a report made by the Palawan State University (PSU) prior to enrolling at least 1,000 farmers to participate in SMARTFarmS where they will be mechanized and advance the farm inputs needed so they don't have to borrow, the farmers got poorer by way of the following practice.

Based on a survey done by the PSU upon the request of PPC-DSH and KAMMMPI the problems in the pilot project sites are:

1. Farm Credit –The Farmers pay three sacks of palay (valued at P1,500 to P2,000 at government support price for every P1,000 borrowed. However, most often the buying price of palay by traders is only half the government support price of P 17.00 per kilo;

2. Mechanization – In the target site, only one tractor is for rent although some farmers have their own "pagong" and hand tractor;

3. Post Harvest Anomaly – Farmers complain of traders that collect loans with their threshers and pay only P7.00 per kilo claiming that the remaining amount is to pay for the thresher;

4. Seed System - Foundation and Registered Seeds are supplied by the Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice) and IRRI. Certified seeds cost P3,000 per 40 kilogram but cost P1,200 per sack at Muñoz, Nueva Ecija where PhilRice is located; and

5. Soil Analysis and Fertilization – Five to 10 sacks of complete fertilizer is used per hectare at the cost P1,400 per sack with an average of 70-80 cavans per hectare and the area has no soil analysis.

With this reality, the government has no choice but to find ways and means of getting the small holder farmer out of his static poverty.

In the 1970, the Marcos administration introduced MASAGANA 99 and for a while the farmers survive with some subsidy.

continued on p4

The “Untold and Unfinished Coconut Story”

by German P. Palabyab

(Editor’s Note: This article is a discussion paper submitted by the author to the first Filipino American Empowerment Conference in Washington D.C., (August 22, 23 and 24, 1997). This was the largest conference by members of different Filipino American associations based in the US in 1997 that tackled empowerment issues of Filipino Americans in North America. This is due for updating at this time.)

As we approach the celebration of the first centennial of the first Philippine Republic we cannot help but also focus on the beginnings of the long history of “special relations” between the Philippines and the United States of America. We are also about to celebrate the centennial of the official start of U.S. - Philippine relations. Our shared History with the United States of America started in December 10, 1898. On this date, the Philippines along with some other Spanish colonies became an American territory under the terms of the Treaty of Paris, which ended the Spanish-American war. The discussions among historians who are slated to gather in Northern California in 1998 will focus on what really happened nearly a hundred years ago. Mr. Frank Kofsky, a professor of history who teaches U.S. foreign policy at California State University in Sacramento predicts that San Francisco will be the site of the “history wars” next year. Professor Kofsky is referring to the academic combat between different versions of the past. Many untold and little known facts are expected to surface under the aegis of liberal academic discussions and almost boundless exchanges of information facilitated by the global information superhighway.

Many horrifying accounts of the Filipino-American war, which was treated merely as an insurrection by the U.S. government at that time, are beginning to surface. Among the little known or untold stories that has become one of the more infamous milestones of American colonial rule in the Philippines was the shameless exploitation and plunder of the Philippine coconut industry through the passage of the Revenue Act of 1934. Sixty-three years ago to be exact, the milking and bilking of the Philippine coconut industry by the Americans and Filipino accomplices started. This article is about this unfinished coconut story.

The Revenue Act of 1934

The Revenue Act of 1934, otherwise known as HR 7835, was passed by the 72nd U.S. Congress on May 11, 1934. Section 6021/2 of the act imposed a 3 cent per pound processing tax on Philippine coconut oil exported to the United States of America.

This excise tax amounted to 200 per cent of the prevailing price of coconut oil during the period and was really designed to make coconut oil and the food products derived from it, uncompetitive in the American market.

The legislation was the result of the lobby of a powerful group representing the interest of the American vegetable oil producers (soybean, cotton seed, and tallow), lard, butter, and producers of other fats and oils.

The American Vegetable oil producers as well as the dairy industry feared the threat posed by competition from coconut oil based food products like margarine.

Coconut oil and its by-products accounted for nearly a third of all Philippine exports to the United States of America at the time HR 7835 was passed. Also at this time, about 70% of the total land area of agricultural lands in the Philippines was planted with coconuts.

The legislation was strongly criticized in the Philippines and was called by a well-known writer for a Manila magazine as “a congressional vendetta”, and termed the legislation as “senseless and unjust”.

Even then Governor-General to the Philippines Frank Murphy protested the tax stating that the 200 percent tax of the current price would work incalculable harm to the Philippines without advantage to the United States. “Socially, it will entail widespread distress and disaffection among the people,” continued the Governor-General.

Realizing the injustice, the harm and the social upheaval that the excise tax would have caused, the law was later amended to provide for the return of the money collected from the tax to the Philippine Commonwealth. But this concession was given based on two conditions that seemed to lie beyond the bounds of reason: first, that not a single centavo of the money which was ultimately exacted from the income of the coconut producers would be used to help the coconut industry; and worse, that the industry was not to receive any budget from the local revenues for the entire duration of the refund. The conditions made for the total denial of funds to the coconut people, whether coming from their own pocket or coming from their government. These two conditions

were proof of the sinister and mindless purpose of the law. This was also an example of how the United States conducted itself as a colonial ruler to its hapless Philippine colony. This was a far cry from what we were taught about America in our history books.

Estimates of the aggregate collection from the excise tax from 1934 to 1966 amounted to some US\$332 million which was credited to the Philippine Coconut Trust Fund in the U.S. Treasury (Act of June 11, 1934, 48 Stat. 929).

The Commonwealth government of President Manuel Quezon used the remittances for “extra ordinary purposes” which included the development of Mindanao, subscription of stocks to the National Development Corporation and the Manila Railroad Company, development of Quezon City, purchase of home sites in large landed estates, reforestation, construction of waterworks and survey and subdivision of the public agricultural lands.

How significant was the impact of the excise tax refund on the Philippine finances? The coconut excise tax refund was the major source of revenue for the war ravaged economy of the Philippines in 1946. It accounted for about 49% of the total Philippine government’s visible assets in 1946. In 1935 it was 42% of the total Philippine government revenues.

With the granting of Philippine independence in 1946, the refunds were stopped per section 506 of the Philippine Trade Act of 1946. But the levy was continued until 1957. It was suspended for three years after that until it was imposed again from 1963 to 1966.

It is estimated that US\$182 million excluding interest remain in the U.S. treasury. This fund has become part of an Omnibus Claim filed by Philippine President Ramon Magsaysay on the U.S. government, in 1956.

The original Omnibus Claim was filed by the 1955 Philippine Economic Mission to the U.S. . The claim that President Ramon Magsaysay followed up in 1956 had a total amount of US\$850 million or P 1.7 Billion in Philippine pesos. P 350.4 million or 20% of which was accounted for by the coconut excise tax claim while the rest were war damage claims and compensation to Filipino veterans who served under the American flag during the World War II. The U.S. rejected the claim. The claim was again revived during the time President Marcos as part of the Omnibus Claim submitted by the Philippine panel in the Joint RP-US Preparatory Committee on Trade Investments and Related Matters. The estimated current value of this unremitted coconut tax fund is about P65.5 billion in Philippine pesos.

Bases for the Claim

The coconut excise tax refund claim is based on the following premises:

The remittance of the excise tax to the Philippine Treasury was covered by statutory provisions of the Revenue Acts of 1934, 1939 and 1945.

Notwithstanding the provisions of the Philippine Trade Act of 1946 which was the basis of the U.S. government to terminate the remittances, the imposition of the tax on coconut oil was a direct violation of Article IV(2)(a) of the Laurel – Langley Agreement, regarding the “ national treatment” of Philippine products vis-a-vis U.S. products with respect to “internal revenue taxes”. Under the parity agreement, there should be no tax on Philippine coconut oil since the Philippines had no similar tax on U.S. vegetable oils.

The taxes also violated the ‘most favored nation clause’ under article IV(2)(b) of the Laurel Langley Agreement because “babasu oil” from Brazil was not subjected to the same processing tax despite its similarity to coconut oil.

The tax was already “absorbed” by the Philippine coconut exporters because of the reduction of the prices of coconut oil.

Considering that the U.S. government has agreed to rethink the veterans claim for compensation, the more reason there is that it should reconsider ‘returning’ the excise tax money to Filipinos who were its payors and rightful owners. There has never been a better time than now to refile the claim.

The refund of the excise tax collections from the Philippine coconut oil was covered by statutory provisions of the Revenue Acts of 1934, 1939 and 1945.

The amount being claimed is based on the unremitted portion of the excise taxes from 1934 to 1957 plus the difference between the amount calculated by the Philippine government as taxes that were collected from 1934 to 1946 (US\$151.5 million) and the total amount actually remitted to the Philippine treasury for the same period (US\$150 million). The US\$151.5 million was based on the data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture on the total U.S. imports of coconut oil from the Philippines from 1934 to 1946.

To be continued on April Issue

Paradigm shift in agriculture

(The Philippine Star) | Updated March 1, 2015

Paris – The model of agricultural production that predominates today is not suitable for the new food security challenges of the 21st century, according to FAO director-general José Graziano da Silva.

While the numbers of the chronically hungry have been reduced by 100 million over the past decade, 805 million still go without enough to eat on a regular basis, he noted in remarks to ministers, scientists, farmers, and representatives of civil society gathered in the French capital for a recent government-organized International Forum on Agriculture and Climate Change.

Increasing production has long been seen as the natural pathway to ending hunger – but today, even though the world produces enough food to feed everyone, hunger remains a problem, he pointed out.

“Since food production is not a sufficient condition for food security, it means that the way we are producing is no longer acceptable,” said Graziano da Silva.

“What we are still mostly seeing is a model of production that cannot prevent the degradation of soils and the loss of biodiversity – both of which are essential goods, especially for future generations. This model must be reviewed. We need a paradigm shift. Food systems need to be more sustainable, inclusive and resilient,” he added.

Climate change a clear and present danger

Agriculture has a potentially large role to play not only in guaranteeing food security, but also in building resilience to the effects of climate change and in reducing humankind’s emissions of global warming gases, according to the FAO director-general.

“The impacts of climate change are no longer an anticipated threat. They are now a crystal-clear reality right before our eyes,” he warned, adding: “Climate change will not only affect food production, but also the availability of food and the stability of supplies. And in a global, interdependent economy, climate change makes the global market for agricultural products less predictable and more volatile.”

In his remarks, the FAO director-general underscored the important role played by healthy soils. “Soils host at least one quarter of the world’s biodiversity and are key in the carbon cycle. They help us to mitigate and adapt to climate change,” he said.

The year 2015 has been designated by the UN General Assembly as the International Year of Soils, and FAO is the lead agency for coordinating the year’s activities.

New approaches

One promising new approach, said Graziano da Silva, is what is known as “climate-smart agriculture” – adjusting farming practices to make them more adaptive and resilient to environmental pressures, while at the same time decreasing farming’s own impacts on the environment.

FAO is home to the Global Alliance on Climate-Smart Agriculture, a broad coalition of stakeholders, including governments; farmers and food producers, processors and sellers; scientific and educational organizations; civil society actors; multilateral and international agencies and the private sector established last September by the UN General Assembly.

The alliance is working to promote sustainable and equitable increases in agricultural productivity and incomes; build greater resilience of food systems and farming livelihoods; and achieve reductions or removals of greenhouse gas emissions by agriculture.

The FAO director-general also highlighted “agro-ecology” as a promising way to move food production onto a more sustainable path. The approach uses ecological theory to study and manage agricultural systems in order to make them both more productive and better at conserving natural resources.

(Reprinted from the FAO website)

BSWM and InangLupa...from p1

InangLupa was also presented as a movement with several appropriate technologies such as the conversion of food waste to organic fertilizers, conversion of idle lands to ADX grass farms for cattle feed and gasifiers and SMARTFarmS to commercialize farming in the town of Pozorrubio, Pangasinan located at the foothills of the Cordillera Administrative Region.

Engr. Casido with Mr. Clarito Corpuz, Municipal Agriculturist said that their federation has become known by other towns because of their present activities of linking with programs like the IYS and movements like InangLupa.



Signing of InangLupa-Institutional Volunteer MOA. L-R InangLupa, Sonny Domingo, EVP and Cheryl Caballero, Treasurer. Pozorrubio, Mayor Chan, Engr. Casido and MAO Corpuz.

InangLupa President Dr Dar...from p1

Regional food trade arrangements can be a boon for food security, but will always be only part of the story, as food security is complex and depends on our national policies.

With that, allow me to close my presentation today by briefly discussing the National Geographic Magazine’s ‘A Five-Step Plan to Feed the World’.

Step one is to *Freeze Agriculture’s Footprint*. Agriculture’s footprint has caused the loss of whole ecosystems around the globe. But we can no longer afford to increase food production through agricultural expansion.

Step two is to *Grow More on Farms We’ve Got*. The world can now turn its attention to increasing yields on less productive farmlands – like the drylands – where there are “yield gaps” between current production levels and those possible with improved farming practices.

Step three is to *Use Resources More Efficiently*. We already have ways to achieve high yields while also dramatically reducing the environmental impacts of conventional farming – through sustainable soil, fertilizer and water management.

Step four is to *Shift Diets*. Promoting a more diverse diet and finding more efficient ways to grow meat and shifting to less meat-intensive diets could free up substantial amounts of food across the world.

Step five is to *Reduce Waste*. Of all of the options for boosting food availability, tackling waste would be one of the most effective.

Taken together, these five steps could more than double the world’s food supplies and dramatically cut the environmental impact of agriculture worldwide. Addressing food challenges demands that all of us become more thoughtful about the food we put on our plates. We need to make connections between our food and the farmers who grow it, and between our food and the land, watersheds, and climate that sustain us.

Feeding the hungry is not a need, but a moral imperative.

Thank you and good day.

“Localizing Anti-Hunger Programs”

Hunger and poverty statistics are often intertwined, but these two metrics are not supposed to be comparable, because their research designs are different from each other. Hunger data is gathered from surveys wherein the respondents would say how many times they experienced it in the past three months or so. Poverty data is gathered from censuses that measure how many households would fall below the poverty line, because they could not afford to buy an imaginary basket of goods, or they are not earning enough money for them to go above a certain threshold. Even if these two metrics are not comparable, it would be reasonable to say that the respondents who would say that they experience hunger are probably those who would fall below the poverty line.

In theory, both hunger and poverty could be eradicated, at least from a statistical perspective. The reason for this is very simple. If there are no respondents who will say that they have experienced hunger, then the hunger rate would go down to zero. In the same manner, if the censuses will say that all households could already afford the imaginary basket of goods, then the poverty rate would also go down to zero. As it looks now however, it seems that it would be easier to aim for a zero hunger rate, than to aim for a zero poverty rate.

Obviously, it would not be intellectually honest if we were to give people money so that they could go above the poverty threshold. However, it is fair and square if we could give them access to some items in the imaginary basket of goods, so that they would not have to buy it on their own. In the same manner, it would be fair and square to give food stamps to people on welfare, so that would no longer experience hunger. This is being done in so many other countries, and there is no reason why it could not be done here.

When I say that hunger and poverty could be eradicated statistically, I also mean doing it technically. In the case of hunger, the technicality could happen if respondents would say that they are no longer experiencing it during the survey period. In the case of poverty, the technicality could happen if the censuses would show that the people already have access to certain items in the imaginary basket of goods, even if they would not have to buy these items, considering that they could not really afford to buy these items in the first place. Somehow, in some possible ways, food or access to food appears to be the common denominators that could make these technicalities happen (again in theory).

To set a goal that would eradicate hunger and poverty nationally would seem impossible as of now, but these could become realistic if the goals are set locally. The reason for this is also very simple. Since there are more than enough people in a locality who could afford to share their food with those who are hungry, then no one has to experience hunger anymore. If this idea sounds too idealistic, the practical alternative is for the local people to grow their own food primarily for their own needs, but secondarily to share with others.

There could be an unexpected bonus to this approach. Since food is the major item in the imaginary basket of goods, then access to food would increase, and therefore more households could go above the poverty line (again in theory).

As it is supposed to be, all the local Mayors are supposed to know who among their constituents are actually hungry and poor. There is no way that they could say otherwise, because the data from surveys about hunger and the censuses about poverty are available for them to read and study, whether they like it or not. While many of these Mayors would say that they have read the data and that they are doing something about these twin problems, it is also a known fact that not too many of them are actually setting statistical goals to reduce the numbers of those who are hungry and poor, until the end of their terms of office. Sad to say, some of them would not even know the difference between poverty reduction and poverty alleviation.

Giving people access to certain items in the imaginary basket of goods should just be a short term strategy, because the long term strategy should be to remove people from the poverty line is to give them the means of income, so that they would be able to acquire these items on their own, using their own money. Towards this goal, the short term strategy should be to give them jobs. Difficult as it may be, the long term strategy should be to help these people so that they could have their own business, not matter how small it is. As it is now, most local government units (LGUs) already have their own Public Employment Service Office (PESO). It is about time that they should also have their own Small and Medium Enterprise Office (SMEO).

I am sure that it is not beyond the means of LGUs to conduct their own localized hunger and poverty surveys. In this connection, they do not even have to wait for the quinquennial censuses, because five years is too long to wait, and besides, a lot of data could change during that long period. What is important is for the Mayors of these LGUs to know the hunger and poverty data in their own local jurisdictions, so that they could set their own hunger reduction and poverty reduction goals. As it is supposed to be, these goals should be in the agenda of the Municipal Development Councils (MDCs), and should eventually be elevated to the agenda of the Regional Development Councils (RDCs).

Just as it does not take rocket science to conduct these surveys, it does not take rocket science either to grow food locally within an LGU. Old and new technologies for food production are available everywhere, and even the urbanized LGUs could implement their own urban gardening programs. Even the landlocked LGUs could now implement their own aquaponics projects, so that they could produce fish and vegetables at the same time. Aside from that, new technologies are now available so that poultry and livestock could be raised in urban areas, without the bad smell that usually came with it. We have the land, we have the technologies. Let us do it! (*Ike Señeres*)

Static poverty...from p1

During the Ramos administration, the government opted for NIC (Newly Industrialize Country) and left the farmers to tend for themselves.

During the Macapagal Administration she supported the passage of RA 8435 or Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act (AFMA) under the *Gintuagang Masaganang Ani* (GMA) but still it was more of productivity and left out profitability for the farmers.

Under the Aquino Administration, the AgriPinoy is now in place and is concentrating infrastructures. We have yet to see a study that farming has become more profitable except in reports that they now have more money despite the high cost of inputs and irrigation.

All of the above have increase productivity and agricultural growth. But the incomes of the farmers remains static and they remain to be poor. It is as if they were only assisted to produce more, but they were not included in equation of progress and remains to be poor because of lack of profitability in palay farming.

The above mentioned programs did not include the farmers to benefit from them, they were left out of the market opportunities due to them, the orientation of the programs were away from their basic interest and livelihood, and all others were developed exempt their very lives.

Hence IMOD (Inclusive Market-Oriented Development) is being introduced by InangLupa. This was developed for many years by the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) under the leadership of Dr. William D. Dar, a smallholder farmers son that has decided to come back to his motherland and

is now providing leadership to InangLupa (motherland) with equally minded personalities, that believes in the smallholder farmers to once and for all develop a country where no one is left behind. IMOD has change the lives of millions of Indians and Africans to prosperity and out of poverty.

IMOD is farmer centric and market oriented as an approached for rural development. The Philippine Rural Development Program (PRDP) can use IMOD as its champion to promote rural development with a human face, as Dr. Dar did in developing science with a human face.

It would be well for the government to look at this collaboration. It has been proven. It can be done if the government is willing to try it. *VLD*

InangLupa Newsletter

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