



# PHILIPPINE TOBACCO NEWS

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## Tobacco trading gets boost from new floor price hike

**T**RADING for Virginia tobacco in Ilocos began early February on a promising note with the increase of floor prices for high grade leaves.

The increase of floor prices of all types of tobacco was approved during the Tripartite Conference initiated by the National Tobacco Administration (NTA) last September 29.

Starting this trading season, the rate of high-grade Virginia leaf (AA) is now P81 per kilogram from P78 of previous year.

The floor price per kilogram for the next grades also increased from P2 to P4, bringing prices to P79 for A, P77 for B, P75 for C, P68 for D, and P67 for E. The former prices are P75 for A, P73 for B, P71 for C, P66 for D, and P65 for E. There was no increase for low grades; it remains at P59 for F1; P56 for F2, and P46 for Reject.

The agency is optimistic given the highly encouraging grade out-turn of the previous trading season. High and medium grades of all types accounted for about 60 percent of the total production

and low grade the rest, according to a data from the NTA Regulation Department.

Administrator Edgardo D. Zaragoza said the agency was satisfied by the state of preparedness of stakeholders ahead of the opening of the trading floors.

The Administrator said that the agency is continuously engaging the tobacco traders and ensuring that prices remain profitable to growers.

“As we enter the 2016 tobacco selling season, it is important that we maintain a balance between growers’ demand and trade concerns,” he said.

Zaragoza said that stakeholders should strictly adhere to the trading regulations and reflect on advice given by the agency from time to time to ensure an efficient marketing system.

“The trading rules are meant to create a smooth environment in which farmers can sell their tobacco at the best prices,” he said.

The Administrator also reminded the farmers of their right to cancel sales if not satisfied with the price offered



REAPING THE FRUITS OF HARD WORK. Corazon Ellorin harvesting Virginia tobacco at their plot in Salincub, Santiago, Ilocos Sur.

Rosella A. Dosono

by buyers. “If they are not happy with prices, they should approach any of our agency officials in the trading center for arbitration,” he added.

Trading for Burley and native tobacco tobacco-growing areas in Regions 1 and 2 will start in March.

For Burley, the top-grade A rose by P7, bringing the price per kilo to P68 from the current P61. The floor prices for Grade B is now P65 and for C, P56, an increase of P6 and P3, from the current prices of P59 and P53, respectively. There was no increase for low grades: P45 for D; P44 for E, P37 for F, and P28 for Reject.

The floor prices of the native type were increased as follows: High-grade, from P66 to P70; Medium 1, from P56 to P58; Medium 2, from P46 to P48; Low 1, from P38 to P40; and Low 2, from P26 to P28.

### Decrease in volume

Data as of December 2015 shows that volume of production last cropping season for all types of tobacco was decreased by about 24%.

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CALIBRATION/SEALING OF WEIGHING SCALES. Faustino O. Taal, OIC NTA Vigan Branch, and Senior TPRO Gilbert I. Yadao, placed calibrated weights onto a weighing scale in a trading center in Vigan to ensure the accuracy of weighing and measuring instruments in preparation for the tobacco trading season in the first district of Ilocos Sur. The Vigan branch conducted early February the calibration and sealing of weighing scales in four trading centers in Cabugao, Ilocos Sur and one in Vigan City. NTA Vigan

**A** MIDST challenges that may exert adverse impact on the local tobacco industry, (such as aggressive global campaign against smoking, increasing health consciousness, increasing domestic taxation, e.g., the New Sin Tax Law, and increasing import liberalization and global competition), the National Tobacco Administration has been very aggressive in fulfilling its twin mandate: (1) to improve the lives of our tobacco farmers and all those who depend on the industry for their livelihood and (2) to promote the balanced and integrated growth and development of the tobacco industry to help make agriculture a solid basis for industrialization, resulting in some significant feats in the development of the industry, for the ultimate benefit of its stakeholders, especially the tobacco farmers.

The industry provides livelihood and sustenance to about 2.9 million stakeholders, including the more than 800,000 tobacco farmers and their families; generates enormous revenues for the Government in the form of taxes, amounting to P68 billion in 2013, which increased to more than P73 billion in 2014, (more than P80 billion, if we include other fees and duties), which help fund its education, health, social welfare, infrastructure, and economic programs all over the country; and earns and saves dollars for the country, estimated at an average of \$344 M from 2011-2015.

Based on PSA-BAS data, tobacco remained as the second among the top 10 commodities with the highest production growth, 11.79%, from 2010-2013, and 14.27% in 2014.



## PROGRAMS, PROJECTS, and ACTIVITIES

The following projects are considered as having contributed to the improvement of the lives of its stakeholders, particularly the tobacco farmers:

### Integrated Farming and Other Income-Generating Activities Project (IFOIGAP)–Market-Driven Quality Tobacco Production

#### a. Tobacco Contract Growing System

For calendar years 2010-2014, NTA assisted a total of 18,142 tobacco farmers covering 12,449 hectares. The total production assistance extended was P400.51 million. Average increase in number of beneficiaries is 26%, while, production assistance is 39%. As facilitated by NTA, production assistance were extended by Tobacco Buyer Firms, GFIs and LGUs to 44,097 tobacco farmers covering 27,714 hectares for a total production assistance of P881.57 million.

#### Yield per Hectare

Across all types, the average yield increased by 6%, from 2,130 to 2,258 kilograms/hectare, with Native tobacco obtaining the highest increase at 20% from 1,875 to 2,251 kg/ha, followed by Burley, while Virginia decreased by 4% in the five-year period.

#### Net Income per Hectare

Overall, the average net income of the tobacco farmer increased by 14%, from P49,874 in 2010 to P56,902/ha in 2014.

The increment came from the Burley type which increased by 26%, from P52,635 to P66,440/ha, and Native which increased by 79%, from P34,347 to P61,615/ha. As earlier presented, the Virginia type was adversely affected by the bad weather condition. [Source: FTSD, from report of Branch Offices TCGS].

## NTA Accomplishment Report CYs 2010-2015: Highlights



#### b. Rice Production Component (2010-2014)

As an IFOIGAP component, this is implemented in line with the rice self-sufficiency program of the government led by the Department of Agriculture (DA), to augment the income of tobacco farmers, by increasing their yield to at least 4,500 kg/hectare. Under the program, NTA provided production assistance to 10,113 tobacco farmers, covering 7,666 hectares. Production assistance totaled P98.89 million. As a result, average yield obtained for the period was 4,968 kg/ha while net income was at P42,570/ha for the period.

#### c. AgriPinoy Tobacco Farmers' Food Processing and Trading Center

The IFOIGAP includes value-adding/processing, where in 2012, the NTA established the AgriPinoy Tobacco Farmers Food Processing and Trading Center (AgriPinoy Project). The project provides production assistance to tobacco farmers in the production of raw materials–hogs and poultry, which the Plant buys and processes into *bagnet*, *Vigan longganisa*, *tapa*, bacon, etc., and sells to Bagsakan Centers, government offices and hospitals in Regions 1, 2,

CAR and Metro Manila. The AgriPinoy Project includes a milling complex, which will start operation this year, to cater to the requirement primarily of the farmer-beneficiaries of hog fattening and broiler production.

With regard to the project's Hog Fattening component, a total assistance of P130.219 million were extended to 1,519 farmer-cooperators. As a contribution to the food sufficiency goal of the DA, the food processing plant produced a total of 440,353 metric tons (mt) of fresh meat, 131 mt of processed meat, 11,278 mt of dressed chicken, from 2013 to 2015.

#### d. Renewable Fuelwood Energy Farm Project and Restoration of Ecological Integrity of the Tobacco Growing Regions

The project, which was provided a total of P174 million, in 2013-2015, from the NTA's entitlement of the Tobacco Fund (RA 4155), aims to address the fuelwood and other forest resources requirements of the farmers in the curing of Virginia and other types of tobacco, as well as assist in the reforestation efforts of the tobacco growing regions.

For 2013 to 2015, the Kahuyang

**Keeping the tobacco industry vibrant despite the threats of the environment**

*AS early as the 80s, the tobacco industry has been looked upon as a sunset industry with global campaign against tobacco smoking, led by no less than the World Health Organization – Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO-FCTC) which became increasingly aggressive in its tobacco control programs over time.*

*Locally, it was brought to the halls of Congress which enacted the Tobacco Regulation Act of 2003 (RA 9211), and of late, the Sin Tax Reform Law (RA 10351), drastically increasing and unifying taxes of cigarettes to make them unaffordable to the poor and the youth. The Law provides preparing the farmer for any eventuality that may arise from said enactment, providing funding for viable alternative livelihood and farming systems, exactly what the anti-smoking advocates would like the farmers to shift towards.*

*Despite all the efforts to suppress the tobacco industry worldwide, it continues to be one of the strong pillars of the nation's economy. The taxes generated from the industry of late amounted to about P80-B in 2014 which increased to about P100-B in 2015, which is helping our government fund its education, health, social welfare, infrastructure, and economic programs. A certain percentage of the tax collection is plowed back to the tobacco growing provinces pursuant to RA 7171 and RA 8240 to help fund their priority programs.*

*From tobacco exports alone, from 2011 to 2015, the tobacco industry earned and saved dollars for the Philippines which amounted to an average of \$344-M annually. Evidently, the various stakeholders continue to exert efforts to make the Philippine tobacco competitive through collaborative undertakings and efforts to enable the farmers to produce the tobacco required by both local and foreign markets.*

*The cooperation and collaboration between and among stakeholders is strengthened through the leadership of the NTA, which sees through a synergistic relationship among sectors from the setting of market-driven production to updating of appropriate production technologies and ensuring equitable profits for all stakeholders through the conduct of the biennial review and setting of floor prices.*

*Thus for Trading Year 2016, there was a general increase in floor prices set in 2013. The farmers can therefore look forward to reasonable profits from their 2015-2016 crops with the new set of floor prices for all tobacco types, especially if they religiously followed the recommended production technology and post-production handling of their crop, from curing to marketing.*

*In support to the above, irrigation equipment are made available to the tobacco farmers. Moreover, Communal Irrigation Systems are constructed and/or rehabilitated in collaboration with the LGUs to ensure the availability of adequate irrigation water for the production of quality tobacco and in support to the Food Sufficiency Program of the government.*

*The prospects for the local tobacco industry, therefore, will continue to be bright amidst environmental challenges provided that all sectors of the industry continue to work together to surpass the same and/or turn these into opportunities to keep the local industry beneficial to all stakeholders. ☺*

Pangkabuhayan at Pangkalikasan (KPP) or grow-out module, a total of 11.5 million trees were planted to an area of 4,598 hectares. For KPP bamboo, 413 hectares were planted with 197,000 bamboos. About 3,000 farmer-cooperators benefitted from the project.

Another component of the project is the Synchronized Tree Planting Day, an inter-agency and inter-sectoral action for the restoration of ecological integrity, where about 3.1 million tree seedlings were planted, by a total of 281,300 participants from national and regional government agencies, local government units, schools, church and civil society groups, in various areas in Regions 1, 2 and CAR, for the same period, 2013-15.

**e. Irrigation Support Project for Small Tobacco Farmers (ISPSTF)**

This is a critical component of market-driven quality tobacco production (addressing requirement for export and import substitution) and food sufficiency program of the government. By the end of December 2014, a total P437.5 million was approved by the Department of Budget and Management, for the funding of 56 Communal Irrigation Systems (CIS) projects to cover the Virginia tobacco-producing provinces of Region 1 and CAR, to benefit an estimated 11,260 tobacco-farmer beneficiaries, covering a potential area of 6,476 hectares. To date, about 90% of the first batch of CIS projects are completed. A supplemental budget of P296.800 million was released for the second batch in 2015, for 42 communal irrigation systems, to benefit a total of 5,160 farmers, tilling of an area 3,340 hectares.

**Research and Development Services**

Under the Industrial Research, the studies on finding alternative uses of tobacco, focused on the use of Tobacco Extracts for Controlling Pests in Vegetable Crops in farmers fields. Such parameters as efficacy, quality, ease of handling, and general acceptance, were considered in the research trial,

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## TRAININGS, SEMINARS, WORKSHOPS, CONVENTIONS

**ATTENDED BY NTA OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES  
January - February 2016**

Branch officials and staff*	Training orientation seminar of tobacco buyers/wholesale dealers, redriers and field representatives of locally grown tobacco of Region 1, NTA Candon Branch Office, Candon City, February 9
Myrna O. Lozano Dina B. dela Reyna	Continuing Professional Education Seminar on "Updates on Philippine Chemical Regulation Agency Overview" conducted by the Integrated Chemists of the Philippines, PNP Multi-Purpose Hall I, Camp Crame, EDSA, Quezon City, February 16-17

\* Giovanni B. Palabay, Emma Beth B. Fantastico, Marcelo T. Pascual, George S. Cabiles, Mario E. Corpuz, Candelario P. Corpuz, Myrna D. Salut, Eduardo D. Enriquez, Estrella G. de Peralta, Juan B. Begonia, Renato C. Aquino, Sr., Orlando O. Galdones, Adonis D. Lazo, Loreto S. Reyes, Valeriana C. Arellano, Charito A. Masiglat, Rosella A. Dosono, Gina Artates, Amelia L. Lacaden, Feliza D. Directo, Susan P. Tingle, Edilberto P. Guerrero, Reynaldo L. Padillon, Santos C. Cañero, Leonardo C. Escobar, Marcelino C. Ancheta, John James B. Canosa, Rolando B. Habon, Benson B. Cariño, Cynthia B. Magaliao, Esperanza E. Alberade, Melecia D. Dato, Ringo Bulautan, Milo Q. Sanchez, Michael Christian D. Laya, Julita F. Valdez, Susana G. Dangpalan, Annabelle C. Dasalla, Analiza Gabuat, Resty C. Cambe, Nelson C. Rentutar, Merly S. Sison, Wenielfreda V. Fangon, Nestor H. Defiesta, Oliva C. Galdones, Restie Peralta, Marcelia P. Pulgar, Hermielynn C. Ringor, Helen D. Peña, Rosario D. Parel, Janette P. Casiño, Matilde D. Arreola, Rowel G. Galdones, Faustino O. Taal, Gilbert I. Yadao, Vicente Cesar G. Rigucira, Esmeralda G. Valera, Ped Ruben B. Barbero, Virgilio A. Valera, Roger T. Madriaga, Elizabeth Q. Biala, Omer D. Casanova

### Tobacco trading gets boost ... from page 1

Farmers planted 32,761 hectares of tobacco in 2015 compared to 38,264 ha in the previous year. In 2015, about 51.95 million kg of tobacco were sold.

The decline in the area planted has been attributed to the current drought conditions. Inadequate rainfall due to El Niño resulted in a drop in the area planted to tobacco and yields were expected to fall below the 2015 crop.

Also a major factor is the decrease in production of native tobacco due to decrease of demand in the market for this type. This development came even after the area for the world-class Isabela Burley increased in Region 2.

Zaragoza said that the decline in production this year could still work in favor of the farmers. He said that the prospect in the market continues to be bright.

“As long as the industry addresses the quality as demanded by export market or specific quality demanded by domestic manufacturing, we will sustain the viability of the local tobacco industry,” he added.

### Leaf grading seminars

The agency, through the Quality Assurance Division of the Industrial Research Department, (IRD) conducted a series of orientation seminars on the NTA Harmonized Grades for Locally Grown Tobacco a month before the trading season.

Participants were core group of trainees for the provincial branch offices, extension workers, agriculturists, farmer leaders, and trading center graders.

According to IRD Manager Dr. Roberto R. Bonoan, knowledge on the harmonized grades would motivate farmer-cooperators to follow strictly recommended technologies in order to attain higher quality tobacco.

“The tobacco farmers get to appreciate the importance of adopting the new systems of classifying their tobacco, following international grading standards, that lead to the production of tobacco leaves as required by the market, especially the export market,” he said. (Neyo E. Valdez)

## TGY 2015-2016 Provincial Contest on-farm evaluation



Cagayan, headed by Branch Manager Dr. Corazon R. Riazonda (left), visited the tobacco farm of Jesus Lorenzo in Dungao, Sto Niño, Cagayan for evaluation. The visit was conducted last February 10 or 45 days after transplanting of the tobacco plants. Mr. Lorenzo is one of the contestants of the Branch Office for the Tobacco Grower of the Year (TGY) Provincial Level for Burley, Crop Year 2015-2016.

Gilbert Tagulam



Candon Branch, headed by Branch Manager Estrella G. De Peralta visited last February 2 the tobacco farm of Salvador Combas in Borobor, Galimuyod, Ilocos Sur for evaluation. Mr. Combas is a contestant of the Branch Office for the Tobacco Grower of the Year (TGY) Provincial Level for Virginia Topped category, Crop Year 2015-2016. He is assisted by Milo Q. Sanchez, TPRO I of Candon Branch.

NTA Candon



Ilocos Norte Branch Manager Mario E. Corpuz (center), head of the Tobacco Grower of the Year (TGY) Branch Technical Committee, visited last February 16 the tobacco farm of Florentino Pitpit in Nagpatayan, Banna, Ilocos Norte for evaluation. Mr. Pitpit is a contestant of the Branch Office for the TGY Provincial Level for Virginia Neutral category, Crop Year 2015-2016. He is assisted by Crisanta D. Agloco, TPRO I of Ilocos Norte Branch.

Jessie D. Calano

# Cagayan Branch tops TGY with 2 nat'l awardees

Gilbert A. Taguiam, NTA Cagayan

IT WAS the first time in NTA Cagayan history that two of its tobacco growers who were provincial contestants in the Tobacco Grower of the Year (TGY) Award for CY 2013-2015 were adjudged national winners. It was a surprise for the branch office, but greatly expected because we know the capability and skill of our farmer contestants from Cagayan and their assisting technicians.

National awardees were **Ignacio P. Llanto** of Cumao, Gattaran, Cagayan for Burley-Improved and **Regie D. Bangibang** of Cattaran, Solana, Cagayan for Native-Cigar Filler.

The TGY is conducted by the NTA to encourage tobacco growers to produce quality tobacco, inspire excellence and innovativeness among them, and develop entrepreneurial skills in their farming ventures. The awarding was held last December 18 at the NTA Quadrangle in Quezon City. The national winners received plaques and cash incentives for their achievements.

Llanto and Bangibang joined two other national awardees from Region 1: Winnie M. Vite of Caronao, San Juan, Ilocos Sur (Virginia-Neutral) and Antonio V. Salmasan of Camanga, Badoc, Ilocos Norte (Virginia-Improved).

Both Llanto and Bangibang were recognized and rewarded for earning a high net income, while enhancing their farming skills with the proper application of package of technology (POT) and proper farm recording. In spite of their success, they continue their commitment and diligence in producing quality tobacco.

The national winners extended their gratitude to the agency's top management headed by Administrator Edgardo D. Zaragoza for their continuous support to the tobacco growers and for taking the initiative to restore the TGY project.



Bangibang (right), with Dr. Riazonda.

## Regie D. Bangibang

**B**ANGIBANG, the youngest awardee at 33, is a diversified farmer and active KPP (Kahuyang Pangkabuhayan at Pangkalikasan) and IFOIGAP-Rice farmer-cooperator of the Cagayan Branch. He had 0.64-hactare farm planted to tobacco, with an actual yield of 2,068.62 kg or 3,232.22 kg/ha, valued at P98,759.65 or P154,312.40 per hectare.

"It pays to be a receptive farmer because aside from a high net income, I was recognized and awarded with a prize," Bangibang said. It helped a lot that he has relatives, especially his grandfather, who are his mentors in tobacco growing. His wife Jovelyn is also very helpful in farming activities. They have two kids, ages 3 and 5.

He was very thankful for the support of the agency in assisting him in tobacco production, especially Branch Manager Riazonda and Edna Zingapan, TPRO I, who guided him throughout the contest period.

Bangibang was very happy with his cash prize. He said he used it for the purchase of GI pipes and other materials needed for the installation of a Pitcher Pump to provide potable water for his family and neighbors.

Branch Manager Riazonda commended Bangibang for his hardwork and in his compliance with the technology and the good agricultural practice as required by the buyer firms. He is a role model of the tobacco farmers in his place. "Just like other tobacco growers in the province, Bangibang uses whatever he earns in his vegetable and rice farming outside the tobacco season to augment his budget for labor during tobacco production," she said. (interviews conducted by Josefa P. Correo and Neyo E. Valdez).

## Ignacio P. Llanto

**A** relatively small producer like most Cagayan Burley farmers, Llanto only had 0.62 hectare for tobacco growing but he turned it into a profitable venture. He had an actual yield of 2,368.80 kg or 3,820.65 kg/ha, valued at P338,937.09. He earned a net income of P157,240/ha, the highest among the awardees, and the highest production efficiency of P47.55/kg.

Like any other tobacco growers in the region, Llanto, 49, inherited his tobacco farming from his father Hermogenes Llanto. Two of his five siblings are also into tobacco farming.

Llanto started growing tobacco in 1998. He is also into corn and vegetable farming and hog raising. The biggest part of his income, however, is sourced from tobacco growing. "Through the years, I was able to buy my own farm, farm implements, improved our house, and send my children to college," he said. His wife, Maricel, is a big help in his farm activities. They have four children, ages from 11 to 19.

Llanto said that he used the prize money from his award to lease an agricultural land for tobacco-corn production.

Dr. Corazon R. Riazonda, Cagayan Branch Manager, describes Llanto as "one of our hard-working tobacco growers who comply with the package of technology in tobacco production, from seedbedding to harvesting." With his outstanding diligence in farming, innovativeness and hardwork, he is sure to produce the quality of leaves that the market needs, she said.

Riazonda is also the chairman of the Branch Technical Committee, the implementing arm of the TGY project in the provincial branches, which is responsible for the recruitment, recommendation, and monitoring of the contestants' activities.

Llanto was assisted by Engr. Elmer Ginez, Agriculturist I of the Cagayan Branch, during the contest period.



Llanto

Herman C. Torres, Manuel M. Beltran, Vicente T. Saccuan, Rogelio T. Tarun,  
Lorelie B. Figarola, Charmagne Ayra C. Cureg



### Registration of Farmers

The Branch Office updated its registry of tobacco growers under its area of coverage. The Branch registry of tobacco farmers includes the home address, type of tobacco planted, area planted, and the contracted market. As of January 15, 2016, the Branch Office has facilitated the registration of 4,996 tobacco farmers representing an aggregate area of 4,665 hectares of Burley (4,477 ha) and Native Cigar Filler (188 ha). The farmers come from 27 of the 34 municipalities of Isabela, and some parts of Nueva Vizcaya and Ifugao.

As of January 31, 2016, the Branch Office has issued identification cards (NTA ID) to 8,753 farmers.

### Tobacco Contract Growing System

The tobacco farmers are covered by tobacco contract growing system (TCGS). Under the system, the farmers are provided with the production assistance from the tobacco traders while the farmers follow the recommended production technologies in tobacco production. It also allows the traders to meet the quantity and quality requirements of their buyers.

In the past cropping season when the demand for Native Cigar Filler tobacco was greatly reduced, the farmers who were not covered by the TCGS did not plant tobacco, thus avoiding the possible problem on excess production.

This year, the office recruited 164 farmers to plant 130 hectares of Burley and Native Cigar Filler tobacco.



### Irrigation Support Project

The Branch Office also implemented the Irrigation Support Project (ISP) initiated by Administrator Edgardo D. Zaragoza. The project provides farmers with financial assistance for the purchase of engine/water pumps that they need in their farming activities. Some of the farmers use the engine not only for irrigation but also to power their kuliglig, trike, or thresher.

#### Branch Profile

The NTA Isabela Branch Office is located in Barangay Osmeña, City of Ilagan, Isabela. Its areas of operations cover the provinces of Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya, Quirino, and Ifugao. It has a complement of 25 plantilla positions: seven staff under the Office of the Manager while 18 men and women comprised the Operations Division, two of which are vacant. Three Job Orders supplement the current manpower of the Branch Office.

The amount of assistance ranged from P25,000 to P60,000 based on the area planted to tobacco. If the cost of engine unit is higher than the maximum loanable amount, the farmer would have to put up the equity but if the cost of the unit is lower than the loanable amount, the office releases only the amount equivalent to the cost of the unit.

The amount is payable from three to five years, and charged with a one-time service fee of 1%, and interest charge of 6% per year, based on declining balance.

During the past three years, a total of 479 tobacco farmers benefitted under this project. Repayment exceeded the expected annual amortization meaning, the farmer-availees are paying their dues on time.

It is also worth noting that the local government of Cabagan, Isabela, through Mayor Rodolfo Albano, assumed the loan obligation of the Cabagan farmers under this project and paid their loan balances amounting to more than P500,000 last year.

This year, another 100 tobacco farmers are expected to benefit from this project.

### Rice Production Project

The Branch Office, under the Wet Season Rice Production Project, assisted 253 tobacco farmers in rice farming. These farmers, who planted 126.50 hectares (0.50 ha per farmer) were given production assistance to buy certified seeds, fertilizers, fuel and oil for supplemental irrigation, and to pay for land preparation.

The production assistance was payable after harvesting, with 1% service fee and 6% interest rate per year. The collection rate for the project as of December 31, 2015 was at 92.70%.



### Search for the Tobacco Growers of the Year Contest

For Crop Year 2015-16, 11 Burley and six Native Cigar Filler tobacco farmers are vying for the title Most Outstanding Burley (Improved Flavor) and Outstanding Native Cigar Filler tobacco farmers, provincial level.

The Search for the Tobacco Growers of the Year is a contest among selected tobacco farmers under the Branch area of coverage. The contestants are rated based on the crop stand, yield and quality, return on investment, and good agricultural practices. The farmer who gets the highest score and meeting all the requirements of the contest will be declared as the winner.

The Branch Technical Committee evaluates the contestants.

### Farmers Organizational Development Project

Several farmer-members of the tobacco farmers cooperatives under the Branch Office participated in livelihood trainings conducted by the NTA and its partner organizations.

Two of the farmers who underwent the trainings were given production assistance to start their livelihood project. They were Domingo B. Buraga, of Aggub, Cabagan, Isabela, who

was given P22,500 for noodle-making, and Femico Capal, of Sto. Domingo, Luna, Isabela, who was given P14,500 for backyard organic fertilizer making.

The assistance is to be paid based on the project cycles, with a one-time service fee of 1% and 6% interest per year.

There are four more farmers this year with approved production assistance for livelihood, waiting for the funds from the Central Office to be released.



### Tobacco Trading and Regulations

There are three licensed tobacco trading centers in the province that have committed to purchase a total of 13.6-M kilograms of tobacco for this trading season, which will commence on April. Burley Full Flavor tobacco will comprise the bulk of this commitment. The commitment for Native Cigar Filler tobacco has been greatly reduced compared with the previous years.

There are three licensed Wholesale Tobacco dealers under the Branch area of coverage.

### Renewable Fuelwood Energy Development Project

This is the second year of project implementation by the Isabela Branch. The project consists of two modules—the Synchronized Tree planting and the Kakahuyang Pangkabuhayan at Pangkalikasan (KPP) Bamboo and Tree production.

In 2014, the Branch was allotted a target to produce and plant 100,000 seedlings as its contribution to the national target. With 12 tree seedling growers, a total of 103,107 seedlings of various species were produced and planted by the participants during the synchronized tree planting.

Last 2015, the Branch allocation was increased to 110,000 seedlings, and the Branch exceeded the number with 115,190 seedlings actually planted in various areas in the province.

For the KPP project, the Branch was allocated 160 hectares of bamboo in 2014 and 220 hectares for bamboo (170 ha) and trees (50 ha) in 2015. The total accomplishments of the Branch Office for the past two years amounted to 443.5 hectares.

This project involves the planting of bamboo and trees in tobacco-producing areas. Farmer-cooperators are provided with production assistance, payable for four to seven years, or when the farmer harvested the bamboos and trees.

An inventory of the areas planted is being conducted to assess the status of the said project.

### Tobacco Free Education Program

As of the second semester of School Year 2015-16, the Branch Office has 82 scholars enrolled in the various campuses of the Isabela State University (Echague campus – 24; Cabagan campus – 34; Cauayan City campus – 11; Roxas campus – 9; and Ilagan City campus – 2) and Cagayan State University – 2.

Ten of these scholars will be graduating this April 2016.

This scholarship program is in consonance with the provisions of Republic Act 9211, implemented by the agency for deserving sons and daughters of tobacco farmers taking courses in agriculture, fisheries, and other fields. Students wanting to take vocational courses are likewise encouraged. The scholars received tuition, allowance, and monthly cash stipend. ☺

## NTA ILOCOS NORTE

# Project Implementation UPDATES

Divina D. Pagdilao

**I**N line with the agency's trust and cascading targets, the NTA Ilocos Norte Branch Office under the leadership of Branch Manager Mario E. Corpuz, had reported the following projects for Crop Year 2015-2016:

### Tobacco Contract Growing Project

SOURCE OF FINANCING	NUMBER OF FCS	AREA (HA)
1. NTA	598	274.75
2. Buyer Firm ULPI, TMI	252	117.25
3. COOPERATIVE	52	21.00
4. Local Government Unit	100	111.50
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,002</b>	<b>524.50</b>

### Irrigation Support Project (ISP)

According to Alexis B. Jamias, Supervising Tobacco Production and Regulation Officer (Supervising TPRO) and ISP Branch Project Coordinator, and Engr. Jesusa D. Calano, TPRO III and ISP Deputy Project Coordinator, the project is being implemented in six municipalities in two batches: Batch 1 includes the projects in Dingras (Barangays Capasan, Bacsil, and Espiritu), Banna in barangays Barbarangay and Nagpatayan, and in Mabuti, Marcos, Ilocos Norte. The six projects in these sites were already completed; however, the recent weather disturbance created negative effect on the constructed facilities.

Batch 2 includes seven project sites, namely, Bomitog and Caribquib in Banna; Sta Asuncion, San Agustin, and San Pedro in San Nicolas; Santa Catalina, Pasuquin, and Catangaran, Solsona. The construction, desilting, and improvement of existing facilities of the projects are ongoing.

### Farmers' Organizational Development (FOD)

The Branch office spearheaded various meetings and orientation seminars for the farmer-cooperators of the different projects, namely, Orientation Seminar on the Tobacco Contract Growing System, Harmonized Leaf Grading and Classification, Livelihood Seed Capital Assistance for Tobacco Farmers, Kahuyan Pangkabuhayan at Pangkalikasan, and the routinary meeting of NTA Extension Workers with farmer cluster members. With these seminars and other direct services to the tobacco farmers, the Branch Office expects that the tobacco farmers will have a better understanding of the different projects that they joined.

### Tobacco Grower of the Year (TGY)

The Tobacco Grower of the Year (TGY) Branch Technical Committee, chaired by Branch Manager Corpuz, has evaluated the nominees to the contest: nine contestants for the Virginia Neutral Category and five for the Virginia Improved Flavor Category. The on-farm evaluation was held in different dates in February, and the next field visitation will be this March.

### Livelihood Seed Capital for Tobacco Farmers

There is one avalee of the Livelihood Seed Capital for Tobacco Farmers in the person of Florencia Romero of Marcos, Ilocos Norte. However, the dissemination of the ongoing project is being undertaken to help more business-inclined individuals avail of the said assistance.

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## AgriPinoy Projects

From July to December 2015, the total sales of the NTA Ilocos Norte sales force amounts to ₱973,605 on meat and meat products, according to Ferdiemark Rosario, marketing coordinator of the Branch Office.

Three applicants for the AgriPinoy Pangkabuhayan Business Package had already started business with the delivery of freezers and meat products intended for the purpose. They are Emilia Salmasan and Elvie De Asis, both from Camanga, Badoc, and Maggie Nieto of Pasuquin, Ilocos Norte.

## NTA Scholarship Program

At present, 58 students, all children of tobacco farmers are benefited from the educational assistance of the NTA.

## Kahuyang Pangkabuhayan at Pangkalikasan (KPP)

A total of 350 farmers applied for the KPP for 2016 with an area of 317.75 hectares. Loan documents are now being facilitated by extension workers for an earlier release of the provision for soil bags for the nursery establishment.

Meanwhile, the Branch Office had already identified the seedling growers for the Synchronized Tree Planting Project this year. Five seedling growers will be tapped to ensure sufficient number of seedlings for the purpose. Extension workers are now coordinating with different groups of environmentalists to be participants of this endeavor.

## Marketing and Regulations

Field representatives (FRs) from Ilocos Norte attended the orientation seminar on 2016 Trading Rules and Regulations for field representatives held in Candon City last February.

In consideration to the FRs who were not able to attend the seminar in Candon City, another seminar was conducted at the NTA Branch Office last February 29, where 14 FRs attended.

In summary, 36 FRs filed their application to the Branch Office for their buying and marketing activities in this year's trading operation. 🌟



Irrigation project in Tayum, Abra under the Irrigation Support Project for small tobacco farmers. NTA Abra

## Abra Branch braces tobacco farmers for El Niño

**T**HE National Tobacco Administration (NTA) is taking necessary measures to support the tobacco farmers in order to maintain high quality products and high productivity with the expected El Niño.

“The effect of El Niño is widespread and undeniable. Hence, we need to provide all the necessary assistance to our farmers especially those who are most-affected,” said Esmeralda Gaerlan-Valera, NTA Abra branch manager.

While everyone is asked to take his share in water conservation, Valera announced that they have completed their irrigation projects in various parts of the province particularly in the tobacco-producing municipalities. These are in the form of mini dams in the towns of Pilar and Villaviciosa and an impounding dam in Tayum.

The NTA also provided water pumps and water hose to the farmers in areas without big irrigation projects in order to help the tobacco farmers cope with the ill-effects of drought.

Valera added that they have also an ongoing water-supply project in Dolores and look forward to starting more water-related projects in the municipalities of Luba, Pidigan, San Quintin, Peñarrubia and Tayum. 🌟 (JDP/MTBB – PIA CAR, Abra)

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which is a prerequisite for the product's registration and commercialization with the FPA.

Two studies were also conducted for standards and quality assurance: 1) Annual Physical and Chemical Evaluation of Philippine Grown and Imported Tobacco Leaf and 2) Annual Physical and Chemical Evaluation of Manufactured Tobacco Products (Cigarettes). The first study involves evaluation/analysis of tobacco leaf samples in terms of physical (maturity, body, color, etc.) and chemical characteristics (nicotine, reducing sugars, etc.), the results of which were presented to NTA TPROs, agriculturists, and farmer leaders during seminars on leaf grading standards. The second study, conducted to determine the presence and levels of hazardous chemicals/carcinogenic substances in tobacco and tobacco products, as part of NTA's regulatory function, showed that cigarettes under the premium-priced brand had the lowest level of nicotine, tar and carbon monoxide compared to medium- and low-priced brand.

Under Agricultural Research, results of two studies were incorporated in the technology manual, such as, 1) “Effect of late topping and irrigation on the yield and quality of Virginia tobacco,” particularly on additional irrigation after 3rd and 5th priming with topping for improvement of yield and quality of top leaves of flue-cured/Virginia tobacco; and 2) “Bioefficacy evaluation of Orthene against the tobacco insect pests and their natural enemies,” since the product was found to be as effective as the currently recommended product with similar active ingredient and was recommended as alternative choice for the control of ants, sucking insects, and black cutworm.



### RADIO PROGRAM

**T**HE “Oras ni Mannalon ti Tabako” radio program for crop year 2015-2016 began airing at DZVV Bombo Radyo Vigan (Saturday, 8:30 to 9:00 AM) last January 16. Co-anchors are Joe A. Taclas Jr. (left), Tobacco Production and Regulation Officers III of Vigan Branch, and Noralyn I. Idica, TPRO III and Administrative/Supply Officer of NTA AgriPinoy.

The OMT, aired during the tobacco season every year, is one of the components of the NTA's Communication Support Program. The interaction with the farmers through the broadcast is a good supplement to technology updating being conducted regularly by the agency's extension workers.

OMT is also being aired at DZTP-Candon (Monday, 12:00 to 12:30 PM) and DZPA-Abra (Sunday, 7:00 to 7:15 PM). The radio program in DZVV Bombo Radyo will run until May 21. 🌟



**T**HE National Tobacco Administration conducted the Orientation Seminar on Tobacco Trading Rules and Regulations (TRR) last February 9 at the Candon City Hall Lobby with Administrator Edgardo D. Zaragoza as main discussant.

The one-day event, facilitated by the Regulation Department (RD), was attended by the provincial branch managers, other key agency officials, and tobacco traders and buyers of Region 1 and Abra. Candon City Mayor Ericson G. Singson welcomed the 224 participants, mostly from the buying sector.

The annual orientation seminar is a prerequisite for applications for licenses or permits to buy or redry leaf tobacco, and Certificate of Authority to the tobacco traders, trading center operators and field representatives.

Administrator Zaragoza informed the buyers of the new set floor prices for 2016-2017 for all tobacco types and the conditions for their availment. He urged all buyers to follow the TRR to have an orderly leaf trading operations for the current trading year.

RD Manager Maybelen B. Dictaan discussed proper grading, proper weighing, prompt and proper payment of tobacco produce, and proper documentation as provided in the TRR. She also discussed the production trend in Region 1 for the last three years and its impact on the present trading season.

Alex L. Borje, RD's Chief TPRO, talked on the salient features of the trading rules and regulations, with emphasis

## ***NTA meets leaf buyers on trade rules***

**Leonora N. Clarin, NTA-RD**



**Administrator Zaragoza meets with the leaf buyers during the orientation seminar on trading rules and regulations in Candon City.** NTA Vigan

on leaves produced by growers under the Tobacco Contract Growing System.

He emphasized the following rules: (1) the farmer-seller and buyer must have a marketing agreement; (2) in case of disagreement as to grade and buying price, the farmer seller must secure a waiver or Certificate of First Refusal from the contracted buyer; (3) the buyer must deduct the amount due corresponding to periodic amortization of loan granted from sales proceeds; and (4) tobacco areas personally tilled by a farmer cooperator must not be contracted by another tobacco buyer.

"Authorized field representatives of a contracting buyer must carry with them the Special Authority to Buy issued by RD, in addition to the required certificate of Authority," Borje said.

As of February 29, the agency has granted requests for the official opening

of registered/licensed trading centers in the Ilocos provinces.

The RD, in compliance with the Rules and Regulations on the trading of locally grown leaf tobacco, issued licenses to 31 trading centers, 15 of them for Virginia type in Ilocos Sur, Ilocos Norte, and La Union.

The agency also issued Permit to Purchase to 11 wholesale tobacco dealers, and Permits to Redry to four redrying plants.

Also in compliance with the existing Rules and Regulations on the Exportation and Importation of Unmanufactured/Manufactured Tobacco, RD has issued 20 Licenses/Authority to Export, 28 Licenses/Authority to Import, three Authority to Transship leaf tobacco and tobacco products, and 12 Accreditations to Manufacturers. 🌱

### **Regulatory Services**

This program involves the exercise of regulatory authority of the NTA, to include the supervision of tobacco trading operations, the setting up of floor prices for tobacco through the conduct of the biennial tripartite conference, the implementation of regulatory procedures on the redrying, preliminary processing of tobacco leaf, and the regulation of importation and exportation.

On the aspect of monitoring/enforcement, the NTA assures equitable trading to include accurate weighing, proper grading, proper pricing, prompt payment and proper documentation, pursuant to existing rules and regulations.

In the exercise of its regulatory activities, improvements are likewise achieved in the issuance of licenses to 36 trading centers, 285 field representatives; issuance of import and export permits/clearances/commodity inspections to 17 wholesale tobacco dealers and redryers, 59 tobacco exporters and importers and 14 cigar/cigarette manufacturers. As of 2015, 91% of the trading centers, 95%

### ***La Union Branch attends tobacco farmers' assembly***

**Candido I. Liangao, NTA-La Union**

**A**S a show of support to Continental Leaf Tobacco Phil., Inc. (CONLEAF) and its tobacco farmer-contractors, the NTA La Union Branch Office attended the Tobacco Farmers' Assembly conducted by the tobacco company held at the CONLEAF Compound, Bulbulala, Bacnotan, La Union last January 12. The occasion was also an opportunity for the branch office to monitor the plans and development programs of CONLEAF for the tobacco industry and its farmers for Crop Year 2015-2016. The said assembly was sponsored by Mighty Corporation, the cigarette manufacturer-partner of

of exporters/importers/transshippers, and 93% of the manufacturers were found compliant to regulatory conditions/rules.

Resultantly, the Agency's income from regulatory fees increased from a total of P96 million to P110 million. 🌱

**Prepared by:  
NTA Corporate Planning Department**

CONLEAF.

Dr. Giovanni B. Palabay headed the participants from the branch office, which included Emma Beth B. Fantastico, Chief Agriculturist; Marcelo T. Pascual, Supervising Agriculturist; Warlie V. Oribello, Senior TPRO; Dominador Coy-om, TPRO III; Candido I. Liangao, Agriculturist I; Felipe E. Gurtiza, TPRO I; and Sinfrosa Valmonte, TPRO I.

Gen. (ret) Edilberto Adan, president of Mighty Corporation, said that the farmers assembly is a very special gathering and a chance to show support for the farmers and their market tie-up. He assured them of Mighty's commitment to buy all their tobacco productions.

CONLEAF President Elena Tan expressed her gratitude to Mighty Corporation for the continuous partnership, and added that the cigarette manufacturer has been the source of CONLEAF's production assistance to the farmers.

Before the program ended, 50 sprayers, T-shirts and calendars were raffled off to the farmer participants. 🌱

Felisa R. Aurellano , FTSD Batac City

## *Pesticides testing on tobacco*

**I**N its quest for a globally competitive tobacco leaf, the National Tobacco Administration is continuously on the move for the systematic testing of quality-enhancing and environment-friendly technologies.

This crop year 2015-0616, the Farm Technology and Services Department (FTSD) is evaluating two pesticides, an insecticide and a fungicide, which could further develop the leaf quality requirements of buyers and promote safety for tobacco end-users.

This attempt is the combined efforts of the NTA-FTSD and two private companies involved in the production and testing of pesticides.

The objective of the projects is to



Imelda N. Riñen (left), FTSD OIC, observes treatment of tobacco seedbed with the test biochemicals in Batac City.

FTSD

safeguard the tobacco farmers and end-users from harmful chemical residues and environmental contamination. The bioefficacy test protocols try to evaluate the pesticides against the common diseases in the seedbed and in the field.

The studies were evaluated by the members of the Technical Review Committee from the central office (see related story on **page 12**), together

with the representatives of the private companies, Edward Macatula of the insecticide study, and Emilio Danigos Jr of the fungicide setup.

The setup of the two studies, which are managed by Avelina O. Guzman, Tobacco Production and Regulation Officer III and Crop Protection Specialist of the FTSD, is located at the NTA Research Station in Batac City. 🌱

## *Maintaining quality Virginia seeds*

**N**TA assures the tobacco farmers of a continuous supply of quality seeds of improved varieties for immediate and future use. Germplasm collection, purification, maintenance and characterization of different tobacco varieties; and seed production and distribution are cautiously implemented by the Farm Technology Development Division of the Farm Technology and Services Department (FTSD).

For crop year 2015-2016, five varieties

of the Virginia type, namely, Reams 266, DH 48, Giant Coker, Golden Harvest, and NC 2326, are planted in 1.5-hectare experimental farms in Batac City. An estimated aggregate seed yield of 10 kilograms, cleaned and purified, is expected to be harvested. This will provide for a 400 to 500-hectare farm if the recommendation of 20-25 grams seeds is applied.

The seed production for the Burley

and Native types is withheld this crop year as the stocks in the seed storage laboratory are enough to last till next crop year.

The studies, implemented by Benjamin P. Fiesta, Science Research Specialist II, were evaluated by the members of the Technical Review Committee from the central office last February 12. The team, assisted by FTSD OIC Imelda N. Riñen and Ilocos Norte Branch Manager Mario E. Corpuz, also conducted the monitoring and evaluation of other FTSD's projects: Curing Study and Vermicompost Study in Batac City.

The germplasm collection, purification, maintenance, and characterization of tobacco varieties, and the number of tobacco collections have increased substantially since its initial year in 1979. The most important consideration in the conservation of germplasm materials is that the seeds maintained in the gene bank should always produce plants which show the representative characteristics of the accession. 🌱



(Left photo) Benjamin P. Fiesta showing the properly labeled seeds in the seed bank and (right photo), with the Technical Review Team at the Seed Production site in Batac City

FELISA R. AURELLANO



### **TREE GROWER VISITS TOBACCO FARM**

**A**farming enthusiast who visited Ilocos Norte to spend the long weekend (Chinese New Year) fell in love with the tobacco plants she saw along the way while touring around the province.

Sandra Bantatua, member of the Mahogany and Fruit-Bearing Tree Growers Association of Rizal, walked into the Farm Technology and Services Department (FTSD) in Batac City on February 9 to inquire about production technology and prospects of growing tobacco. Being from San Mateo, Rizal, she is familiar with the

Fortune Tobacco Corporation cigarette plant in Marikina, and now she thought of experimenting to plant tobacco.

Imelda N. Riñen, FTSD OIC, gave Bantatua a brief orientation on tobacco technology, and brought Bantatua to the experimental farm in Barangay Tabug for a more detailed and actual view of the plant.

Riñen gave a pinch of the Tabije variety of the Native tobacco type as a token for Bantatua on her visit to the office and shall serve as the first seeds for her experiment. 🌱



(From Left) Raul Bantatua, Luzviminda Padayao, Imelda Riñen, Sandra Bantatua, and Benjamin Fiesta during the field visit at Brgy. Tabug.

**NTA Administrator meets farmers on hog production**

**A**DMINISTRATOR Edgardo D. Zaragoza had a dialogue with tobacco growers who are farmer-cooperators of the NTA AgriPinoy hog fattening project, at the NTA AgriPinoy Food Processing Facility and Trading Center in Nanguneg, Narvacan, Ilocos Sur last February 8.

NTA AgriPinoy Project Operations Manager Minerva P. Mizal and NTA Candon Branch Manager Estrella G. De Peralta facilitated the meeting, which was attended by around 300 farmers of the NTA Candon Branch.

As of February this year, there are 87 tobacco growers in six clusters who are cooperators of the hog production in the current cycle. Some 375 hogs were dispersed last November to December and another 375 were dispersed early this year, or a total of 750 hogs.

The hog fattening project, which was launched in 2013, is one of the income-generating activities designed by the NTA to boost farmers' earning outside of their regular trade. The hogs were sold to the AgriPinoy food processing facility. 🌱



NTA Administrator Zaragoza answers queries from the tobacco growers during an open forum on hog production. NTA Candon

**Business assistance to boost AgriPinoy sales**

**N**TA initiated the Pangkabuhayan Business Assistance Program, also known as Marketing Facility Assistance and Livelihood Seed Capital Assistance Program, to establish marketing tie-ups by way of product distributorship through the provision of credit line to qualified individuals or entities.

According to AgriPinoy Operations Manager Minerva P. Mizal, the program supports the aggressive marketing efforts of the NTA AgriPinoy Project and facilitates the distribution and sale of the meat products.

Twenty individuals and one cooperative availed of the Pangkabuhayan Business Assistance Program of the NTA through its AgriPinoy Project.

The business assistance comes in two starter packages: Package 1.A, which consists of assorted AgriPinoy Products amounting to a maximum of P30,000 including a 7cu ft. freezer, and Package 1.B, which consists of assorted AgriPinoy Products amounting to a maximum of P30,000 without freezer, with proof of available functional freezer.

Among the avalees of Package 1.A, 12 established their business in Narvacan, Ilocos Sur. They are Josephine Albaran, Tita Arquines, Marilyn Cabigon, Rosalinda Cabotage, Matilde Cabradilla, Isabel Crisolo, Glenda Fagaragan, Dolores Tacla, Beatriz Tolentino, Margarita Cabral, Sylvia Cabotage, and Estrella Cardines.

Other avalees of the Individual Package 1.A are Bernard Vicente of Sinait, Ilocos Sur; Maggie Nieto of Pasuquin, Ilocos Norte; Elvie de Asis and Emilia Salmasan of Badoc, Ilocos Norte; Flordeliza Bumatay of San Fernando City, La Union; and Karen Beleno of Bangued, Abra.

Evelyn Perico and Charito Padilla, both of Sta. Maria, Pangasinan, availed of Package 1.B.

San Fabian PCWI Multi-Purpose Cooperative in San Fabian, Pangasinan availed of the Coop Starter Package which consists of AgriPinoy products amounting to a maximum of P50,000.

To promote the quality of life of farmers by increasing their productivity and income, the NTA has engaged in the production of various fresh and processed meat products at its AgriPinoy Meat Processing Plant located at Brgy. Nanguneg, Narvacan, Ilocos Sur. 🌱



Plant Supervisor Diosdado L. Maduli (center) assisted auditors Roy Antonio Teneza and Tom Quilaquil from the Commission on Audit (COA) office of the NTA Central Office during the three-day COA audit on the implementation of the NTA AgriPinoy Project (NTA-APP) last February 3-5.

**Visitors from Mallig, Isabela**

SOME 30 officers and members of the Second District of Isabela Tobacco Farmers Association, Mallig Chapter, and officials of the Local Government of Mallig, Isabela had a Plant Tour at the NTA AgriPinoy Tobacco Farmers Food Processing and Trading Center last January 29.

The plant tour was granted by Administrator Edgardo D. Zaragoza, upon the request of Juan M. Bulauan Sr., president of the said tobacco farmers' association. Primitivo A. Magudang and Timoteo C. Dorol Jr., both Agriculturist I of NTA Isabela, assisted the group during the plant tour.

Plant Supervisor Diosdado L. Maduli gave the visitors house lecture on the food facility, and a brief tour at the slaughterhouse facility of the plant. 🌱



The 2nd batch of trainees for Slaughtering Operations NC II passed the final assessment conducted by the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA). The assessment was conducted by Engr. Ed Frando, Supervising TESD specialist, at the training room of the NTA AgriPinoy Training School in Nanguneg, Narvacan, Ilocos Sur last February 10 and 11.

Noralyn I. Idica

## Project evaluation team visits protocol research sites in Ilocos



- (1) Parangopong, Batac City;
- (2) Allangigan, Candon City;
- (3) Patpata, Balaoan, La Union

**T**HE Project Technical Review and Evaluation Committee conducted evaluation and monitoring of the ongoing protocol research projects on tobacco in La Union, Ilocos Sur, and Ilocos Norte last February 11 to 12.

The evaluation team from the NTA Central Office visited the following research projects in Patpata, Balaoan, La Union: “Efficacy test of Flupro 14EC Plant Growth Regulator to control Suckers on Virginia tobacco,” “Effect of K-Humates S100 (Granulated) on root development, nutrient retention and leaf quality of tobacco plants,” and “Efficacy of Avator Bio Inoculator Fertilizer on the agronomic parameters and yield of tobacco plant.”

The evaluation team also visited the research project “Efficacy of Natrient as Growth Enhancer in Virginia tobacco production” in Allangigan Primero, Candon City; and the research projects “Field efficacy evaluation of Timorex Gold against common diseases of tobacco” and “Evaluation of Venimark against early



Lepidopterous insect pests of tobacco in the Philippines” both in Parangopong, Batac City.

Each setup was evaluated on the following parameters: field layout and randomization, number of treatments, crop stand, and initial treatment effects.

Members of the evaluation team are Department Managers Rex Antonio P. Teoxon (CorPlan), Dr. Roberto R. Bonoan (Industrial Research), Dinah E. Pichay (Internal Audit), and Ma. Teresa B. Laudencia (Finance). They were assisted by FPA- (Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority) accredited researchers, namely, Warlie V. Oribello of La Union Branch, Amelia L. Lacaden of Candon Branch, and Avelina O. Guzman of the Farm Technology and Services Department (FTSD).

The researchers briefed the evaluation team on the remaining activities to be undertaken until the completion of the

projects.

According to Bonoan, the pesticides or fertilizers that will be found to be as effective as the currently recommended products with similar active ingredients will be incorporated in the technology manual or in the Package of Technology as one of the products that the farmers can choose from in tobacco production.

Managers of the three branch offices and their technical staff, along with representatives from participating companies, joined the evaluation team in said field work.

While in Batac City, the evaluation team, assisted by FTSD OIC Imelda N. Riñen and Ilocos Norte Branch Manager Mario E. Corpuz, also monitored and evaluated other FTSD’s projects: Seed Production (Virginia), Germplasm Collection, Curing Study, and Vermicompost Study. 🌱

## Administrator graces PhilSCA Anniversary

**A**DMINISTRATOR Edgardo D. Zaragoza was the guest of honor during 47th Charter Anniversary celebrations of the Philippine State College for Aeronautics, held in its main campus in Piccio Garden, Villamor, Pasay City last January 26.

The Administrator talked on the topic “Research Collaboration with NTA on Composite Materials” before the school’s top officials headed by PhilSCA President, Dr. Bernard R. Ramirez, faculty members, and student leaders.

He commended PhilSCA, one of the top performing aeronautical engineering schools in the country, on its commitment to research and development which they are able to accomplish through partnerships with private and public entities.

“We, in the National Tobacco Administration, in addressing the challenges

that our industry will face over the next decades, there can be no more pressing issue than that of enhancing our research and development capabilities,” he said.

The Administrator mentioned the ongoing protocol research programs wherein the agency collaborate with agricultural inputs suppliers, like fertilizer manufacturers and other agribusiness companies in the evaluation and testing of their agriproducts for efficacy, to see if these can improve the yield and quality of tobacco and reduce cost of production.

“We also have our continuing research on alternative uses of the tobacco plant. For now, we have used the tobacco pulp and stalk as raw materials for paper, cardboard, plywood among many uses,” he added.

The Administrator also said that there is a possibility of partnership with the top



Administrator Zaragoza, with PhilSCA President Dr. Bernard R. Ramirez, views a plane prototype during the opening of the academic and research exhibits. **NEYO E. VALDEZ**

aeronautics school in exploring further on this research using the pulp and stalk as composite materials for industrial use. (Neyo E. Valdez) 🌱