



DAR-IARCDSP ASSISTS SITIO LAGON FARMERS MULTI-PURPOSE COOPERATIVE (SILAFAMCO) AS IT CONTINUES TO BE A VEHICLE TO DEVELOPMENT

When the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) implemented the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program, the land of Mr. Jose Lagon was distributed to the workers of his farm. One hundred forty-eight farmers were awarded with land and many of them became members of the SILAFAMCO cooperative. The cooperative was also awarded five (5) hectares of arable land, half planted with African oil palm tree and the other half dedicated to rice.

DAR-IARCDSP (DEPARTMENT OF AGRARIAN REFORM – ITALIAN AGRARIAN REFORM COMMUNITIES DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT PROGRAM) assisted the cooperative with a series of trainings as well as with the establishment of new livelihood activities aimed, on one side, at strengthening the cooperative, and, on the other, at creating extra-income (fresh water fish production, vegetable production).

Currently, the cooperative had already three harvests cycles of tilapia and hito from the fish pond which provided the cooperative with both a substantial income (deposited in its general fund) and a contribution to the family food consumption.

In terms of vegetable production, the cooperative was able to establish a demonstration area of 1,000 square meters as well as individual gardens with areas ranging from 500 to 1,000 square meters. While individual gardens benefit single families, the income generated by the demonstration plot is deposited into the general fund of the cooperative.



Jeanette Lisbo

In a conversation with Jeanette Lisbo, Vice-Chairperson of the cooperative, she said, “*Nakahatag ang mga proyekto sang DAR-IARCDSP sa amon sang daku nga kaayohan kay nakabulig sa amon pagkaon kag ara pa gid kami sang kita kay ginabaligya man namon ang iban.*” (The projects of DAR-IARCDSP provided us great benefits and helped us earn as we sell some to the others.)

The general fund is the source of the benefits enjoyed by the members, to wit: services of the farm machinery, dividend and patronage refund, mortuary benefit, hospitalization of members and their family, scholarship of children (elementary level only), and production loan.

Jeanette Lisbo also said “The cooperative is a big help to the people, especially the different benefits it gives to the members. We were able to surpass trials, big and small, and these trials strengthened us. One of the reasons for the good management of the cooperative is the capacity of building activities from DAR-IARCDSP.”

Cooperative Chairperson Virginia D. Gonio said: “DAR-IARCDSP’s training and projects have been a big help to us because of the benefits they provided for us. This is why I am still with the



Virginia D. Gonio

cooperative since 2009 amidst difficulties and hardships that we encountered including the harassment of an armed group last 2017”



Nena Penuela



Rolando Peril

The Audit Committee Chair Nena Penuela cited that her children graduated through the loaning program of the cooperative. BOD member Rolando Peril, who has been with the cooperative since its formation, added that since the cooperative is a big help to the people, it should be given utmost attention and care because the cooperative is confronted with many problems.

The cooperative is now operating many activities: farm machineries for land preparation and post-harvest including hauling of oil palm; african palm oil plantation; rice production; inland fish production; cassava mill; vegetable production.

To sustain the cooperative and its projects, regular meeting of officers and the BOD is conducted every third Wednesday of the month. General Assembly is conducted every April of each year. The Cooperative Development Agency (CDA) also conducts mandatory training to 5 major officers of the cooperative. The General Manager provides the yearly reportorial requirements to CDA.

Financial management is also very important. Margie Devecas, the Treasurer, stated: “Every transaction is recorded. Financial reports are provided during regular meetings and during general assemblies.” She further said with pride that serving the cooperative is serving the people.



Margie Devecas

Cooperative officials were then very thankful to the DAR-IARCDSP programme for its help and they expressed the desire to keep on being sustained mainly in terms of capacity building in order to be able to provide better and effective services ti the SILAFAMCO members.