

PCC Newsletter

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In Davao City

'Karbaw' foods beckon gourmands

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ABOUT THE COVER

Main photo (by RGBumanlag) displays a plateful of carabeef (*Pochero*) in a Davao City eatery; other photos are about the other products from the carabao.



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In Davao City

'Karbaw' foods beckon gourmands

By Rowena Galang-Bumanlag

In the bustling city of Davao, where everyone seems to be occupied with the demands of another busy day, there is a consistent spot oozing with an aroma that offers a perfect respite not only for the restless feet gone tired but also for the stomach yearning for a sumptuous refill.

Easily, food lovers, even those with the most selective palate, are drawn to "Blue Carabao" where a full range of viands from Filipino or mostly Asian cuisine are offered.

The Blue Carabao Diner and Blue Carabao Eatery carry the slogan: "Taste the Power of the Carabao" and offer a promise of providing customers "Power to your Peso". This branding depicts the

commitment of these restaurants to provide only the best-tasting food to its customers at the most affordable prices.

Owned by a Canadian national and his Filipino wife, Francis and Sherry Scott, these restaurants offer both regular Filipino dishes and original recipes that survived perennial copycats.

Topping their culinary repertoire are the *hinalang* and *pochero*. Both are soups but can be exquisite complements to rice.

'Soup for the soul'

Hinalang, also called *halang-halang*, has been in the centerpiece of its menu since the couple established the Blue Carabao Eatery in 2001. In October 2009, they opened a branch in the city and

called it the Blue Carabao Diner. Even then, almost a decade now, this dish has remained among the gourmet's top picks.

Hinalang is a Visayan dialect that means spicy. But this is an understatement as the Blue Carabao's recipe surprisingly triggers a sure kick for sluggish persons. The soup exhibits more character than the usual menu served as appetizer, such as bouillon, consommé and other broths.

It is a brownish carabeef (carabao beef) soup primed with a handful of ginger, chili pepper (*siling labuyo*), onions and spices. Compared with other soup recipes with beef as the basic ingredient, the chunks of carabeef in the Blue Carabao's *hinalang* practically "melt in the mouth", making it a wise choice for lunch among office workers

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Mrs. Sherry and Mr. Francis Scott



'KARBAW' FOODS... (from page 3)

in the area who usually want the most of their brief recess.

Mrs. Scott disclosed that the carabeef is tenderized in a pressure cooker for 30 minutes; the shanks for 45 minutes.

Any dish that reflects the culture of the community and portrays such character that even the most picky food enthusiast would relate to is guaranteed a niche in the food business. This has been the case of *hinalang* soup as proven by queues of loyal followers.

Hinalang has virtually caught the attention of gourmands who deliberately express their praises for the Blue Carabao

restaurant and its signature soup through the internet. A search for the words "blue carabao" in the internet would show favorable reviews from those who have partaken the soup.

Even foreigners who happen to pass by the food outlet, the Scotts said, can't help but take their sip of the popular *hinalang* and apparently they become satisfied with sure treat.

Behind the success of the recipe, Mr. Scott said, is his wife-partner and Blue Carabao master chef—Sherry Scott.

Mrs. Scott has been with the business of *hinalang* for 10 years. It was originally

her father's (Maximino Salve) recipe, which was one of the food delights offered in their small eatery, then, "*Karbawan ni Manong*", which specialized on carabeef dishes. *Hinalang* gained the attention of diners from then on.

"I continued with the business until I met my husband who is also very supportive of the venture and really appreciates my talent," Mrs. Scott said.

Karbawan comes from the root word *karbaw* which is a Hiligaynon term meaning carabao. *Manong*, on the other hand, is an Ilocano term which means "older brother".



taro, Chinese cabbage and straw beans.

Mrs. Scott, who is the restaurant's master chef, said that what makes the Blue Carabao *pochero* special is its tasty white soup that she had expertly perfected over time. She executes the technique with the use of a specific variety of taro that gives its exquisite appeal.

Pochero, also called bulalo in Luzon, reflects a Spanish tint in the Filipino cuisine. During the Spanish period, *pochero* was a favorite dish served usually during special occasions. It has since become a comfort food and the most-sought-after-dish on the Filipino diner's table whether on important occasions or on a cold weather.

At the Blue Carabao restaurant, it is almost impossible to shy away from ordering a bowl of *pochero* as it is already considered by its most loyal patrons either as an appetizer or as the main course along with a cup of steaming rice.

As more and more diners pick *pochero* in the array of Mrs. Scott's display of culinary skill, it is sure to be a mainstay, and one of the highlights, in the Blue Carabao restaurant's menu board.

A bowl of this flavorful soup, which can serve up to two persons, is also reasonably priced at Php50.

A serving of quality standard

One unique and salient feature of the Blue Carabao restaurant is its consistent transparency to customers. In fact, Mr. and Mrs. Scott encourage diners to take a tour of their kitchen to appreciate how the foods are meticulously prepared before they are served on the dining tables.

The kitchen staff follows safety and sanitary protocols on hand washing, preparation and cooking. Reminders and instructions on these are printed and laminated on a paper and strategically fixed on the working areas where workers can easily see and follow them.

"We are implementing the strictest sanitary and safety standards in our kitchen, which are the same standards used by the Health Department of the City of Toronto. That's one thing that Blue Carabao can be proud of. We make sure that we give back only the best service to our customers by upholding quality standards," Mr. Scott said.

He used to work as an environmental technician in an oil refinery company in Alberta, Canada before he decided to settle

In "Karbawan ni Manong", Mrs. Scott said their customers were mostly males. Apparently, the customers would love to snatch a sip of the spicy carabeef soup to get sober after a rendezvous with the booze.

Over the years, the range of customers expanded to include bankers, executives and tourists. The females also gained appreciation of the nutritive value of carabeef and favored its distinct and flavorful taste over other meat used in soup.

A serving of *hinalang* is affordably priced at Php50 which can be shared by two persons.

Comfort soup

A classic Filipino beef stew is also served at the Blue Carabao. It's Mrs. Scott's version of *pochero*, which comes as an alternative for those who do not fancy a spicy soup.

Hers is teeming with carabao's shank with bone marrow, young or full-sized corn,

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Leather goods that triumph quality over quantity

By Joahna G. Goyagoy

While the Philippine leather industry is facing manifold shifts, one product store using leather as raw material has withstood these challenges for more than 35 years now.

Leather products are known for their durability, elegance and appearances not easily affected by time. In fact, as time goes by, the look is enhanced.

In addition, these products are quite popular in the market due to their style and trendy look.

The Our Tribe store, owned by Mario Tayag, Sr., is one of the best sources of leather goods in the Philippines that are handcrafted from carabao's and cow's

hides. Other than handbags, Our Tribe also manufactures shoes, sandals, slippers, belts, wallets and other accessories for men, women and kids.

The store, located at Sikatuna Village in Quezon City, started its operation on October 9, 1972. It later opened its branches in different supermalls in Metro Manila that include the SM Southmall, SM Dasmariñas, Market Market, SM Fairview, SM Megamall and SM North, Edsa.

Dorothy Cajulao, Our Tribe administrative supervisor, said, the leather industry is experiencing a slowdown due mainly to lack of carabao hide supply and fast-phasing fashion trends.

Leather products, however, continue to thrive because it never runs out of customers here and abroad, she said.

"They (Our Tribe customers) say that



Other products from cow and carabao leather crafted by Our Tribe.




the supermalls. On those occasions, she added, more customers come in to buy products of their choice.

“There are also customers who ask for reservations for particular leather product and buy it when the store anniversary comes,” she added.

Cajulao proudly said that their products are known not only for their quality but also because of their elegance and delicate craftwork that make them irresistible for customers. Our Tribe products are designed by Maria Angela “Lala” Tayag-Fajardo, the owner’s daughter. She is also the manager of Our Tribe stores.

Among the leather goods that the Our Tribe store offer are:

- **Leather bags, totes, and purses.** Meticulously designed, these bags come in different sizes, colors, and shape that suit anyone’s preferences.
- **Footwear.** The footwear for children, men and women, suits the taste of today’s fashion trend. It has several designs and colors to satisfy one’s tang for fashion.
- **Accessories.** These include wallets, key chains, belts, mobile phone case, and bracelets. They come in different varieties for men and women with wonderfully designed shapes and styles.

Cajulao said their products are giving preferences to quality more than quantity. 

“Our buyers are mostly *balikbayan*. They love to bring our products to other countries and give them to their friends and relatives as presents,” Cajulao said.

they prefer leather products because of its quality and elegance,” she added.

Leather goods are one-of-a-kind products that normally have lofty standard when it comes to the materials that are used. Many buyers opt to buy leather goods because of its overall distinctiveness.

One such distinctiveness is its unequalled durability. The fact that the product will last an extraordinarily long time makes its price worth every peso in the end.

To attract more customers, Cajulao said that they go on sale during their anniversaries and during sale seasons in

Our Tribe Main Store
Location: 167 Maginhawa St., Sikatuna Village,
UP Diliman, Quezon City
Tel: (02) 921-6715





By Khrizie Evert M. Marcelo

Unknown to many, Tuguegarao in Cagayan is a proud home of many *pandays* (blacksmiths) and the ancient art of bolo and knife-making.

According to several Tuguegarao residents, they inherited their talent in knife-making and blacksmithing from *Ilokano* migrants.

A blacksmith is someone who forges and shapes iron with the use of a hammer and an anvil.

One of the most sought after product of the blacksmiths of Tuguegarao is the *itak* (bolo). Its finesse and durability can be attributed to the quality of the materials used and to its make. Specifically, carabao's horn is shaped into a handle of the *itak*.

Brgy. Larion Alto, Tuguegarao is known as a *blacksmith barangay* in Region II. The place is known in the province and nearby provinces for the quality *itak*/bolo products that it produces. The product bears the name *Tuguegarao*, thus, it becomes a proud product of the province.

Brgy. Capt. Pablo P. Flores, 60, said that knife and bolo-making has been the main source of income for all the families residing in his barangay ever since. From their forefathers, up until the new generations, the tradition of knife-making continuous to thrive and is passed on to the next generation.

He recalled that the first families to venture into this business were the Villanueva, Campos and Butay clans. Until now, their grand and great grandchildren rely on this business as their primary work, farming coming in as second.

For more than a century, they use the carabao's horn as the handle for their products. Most of the buyers anyway, always look for the bolos whose handle is made from carabao's horn.



Rodrigo Capugawan (foreground), along with his helper, is shown crafting metals into bolos to be fitted with carabo-horn handle.

Tuguegarao
Bolo-makers
make use of carabao horn
in their craft





Cutting the horns into shape.

I was born to our parents' practice in bolo-making industry. Even while I was still young, I was already being taught how to make bolos. Eventually, bolo-making has become my source of income," Mang Arnel said.

Arnel Clemente, 42, has been in the business for 30 years. He became a blacksmith when he was only 12 years old. His father taught him how to become one.

"Nakamulatan ko na ang paggawa ng itak ng tatay ko. Bata pa lang ako ay tinuturuan na n'ya 'ko kung paano gumawa nito. Hanggang sa tumanda na ako ay ito na ang naging hanap-buhay ko (I was born to our parent's practice in bolo-making industry. Even while I was still young, I was already being taught how to make bolos. Eventually, bolo-making has become my source of income)," Mang Arnel said.

A father of four children, he earns Php2,000 a week from his knife-making works.

He usually sells 100 knives a week. His knives are sold from Php100 to Php180 each depending on the size.

The carabao's horn cost Php300 per pair. Each horn can make 10 knives handle.

The slaughterhouses in Tuguegarao and nearby places like Tuao, Cagayan and some

towns of Isabela are the main sources of the carabao's horns that he and the others use for their knife-making works. Most of the time, horn dealers or *vijeros* deliver the horns to them personally.

The horns are cut manually using a saw and a drill to make a hole. Each horn is divided into five pieces measuring 5 cm long. A pattern is used for accurate design of the handle. A *rematse* (rivet) is used for clamping.

Blacksmiths have their own men who do bulk orders for them and then sell the products to other places.

"Kahit ganito lang ang trabaho namin, maganda naman ang kita. Huwag ka lang sisira sa usapan ukol sa order na itak, babayaran ka naman nila (Even if this is the only kind of work we do, income is good. They will pay you for sure if you will not renege on the agreement on the orders for finished products)," shared Mang Arnel.

Mang Arnel has two workers helping him in his business.

Rodrigo Capugawan, 52, like Mang Arnel, shares the same story. He inherited his talent in blacksmithing works from his father. He has been a blacksmith for 35 years and now his two sons followed his footstep. He provides them with their daily needs. He was also able to put up their own house out of his works.

"Karamihan sa mga bumibili at nag-aangkat ng itak sa amin ay tinatawag naming managers. Pag maramihan ang kuha, mas mababa ang bigay namin (Most of the buyers and those making orders for our bolos are collectively called managers. If the orders are in big quantity, the price for the product is cheaper)," said Mang Rodrigo.


According to Flores, the managers tend to profit more from the products they sell.

He once tried to seek assistance from the Department of Trade and Industry for financial assistance and to provide supply of raw materials but, somehow, it did not prosper.

The supply of carabao's horn is limited, Flores said. There was a time, he added, that they opted to use rubber tire materials as alternative instead of horns for handle-making. The material is much cheaper and more handles can be made out of it. But due to some complaints from their customers, saying it is fragile, they returned to using carabao's horns.

Buyers of *itak* or bolo are mostly farmers and residents and from provinces like Bataan, Pangasinan and Zambales. Local and foreign tourists also make orders for well-crafted *bolos* or knives.

March and November are peak months for the knife-makers of Tuguegarao. This is understandable as these months are harvest periods for the rice farmers.

Flores plans to celebrate their next fiesta with *Itak Festival* as the centerpiece. He said the affair will demonstrate their acknowledgement for the blessings that the knife-making industry has brought to their barangay. 

Brgy. Capt. Pablo P. Flores

Location: Brgy. Larion Alto, Tuguegarao City
Mobile no.: 0927-718-4095



By Khrizie Evert M. Marcelo



Chicharon (pork crackling) has been a part of the Philippine native cuisine. It is one of the finger-food snacks being sold mostly in *sari-sari stores* (convenience stores), restaurants and supermarkets. Aside from *balut* (fertilized duck's egg), *chicharon* is among the favorite *pulutan* (appetizer or hand food) for the beer drinkers.

Made from fried pork rinds, it is usually dipped first in vinegar mixed with

was the first *chicharon* introduced with a unique taste. It can be taken without having to dip it in the usual vinegar mix.

First introduced in garlic flavor, it is now available in two new variants---hot and spicy and onion and vinegar.

One of the most popular *pasalubongs* (presents) bought by tourists in Cagayan Valley, *Chicha-rabao* came all the way from Tuguegarao and bears the *Carne Ybanag* brand. Produced by the Lighthouse Cooperative, it has become the best seller among *Carne Ybanag's* products outside its processed meat.

CHICHA-RABAO

is another wow food from the carabao

garlic, onion, salt and crushed chili pepper before partaken. It is mostly considered as a "guilty pleasure" due to the fat attached to the skins.

Although *chicharon* is definitely not for the weak heart, it serves as an alternative from buying too expensive viands.

But for a less fatty *chicharon*, one must try a pack of *Chicha-rabao* – a native *chicharon* made from carabao's skin.

Chicha-rabao, as many describe it, is not as heavily fat-laden as the other *chicharons* being sold in the market. It is puffy in texture, like puffed cheese balls, with a light and tasty flavor. Nutrition wise, it is definitely less in fat and lower in cholesterol content since it is purely made from carabao's skin only.

A home-grown product, *Chicha-rabao*



Humble beginnings

Lighthouse Cooperative, a church-based cooperative, was established in August 1998 with 23 members. It started as a catering service with an initial capital of only Php3,750. From its humble beginning, it is now recognized as a presidential awardee for outstanding medium enterprise in Luzon in 2009.

Head Pastor Rosauro "Pastor Ross" Resuello, along with two other members of Victory Christian Fellowship (VCF) in Tuguegarao City, saw the need for establishing a cooperative that will help

provide social and economic assistance to some of their members and help spread the ideals of the church.

A great demonstration of this advocacy is reflected in three main goals: to help provide for the programs and project of VCF ministry, generate employment for its members, and provide additional investment, income and saving opportunity.

In 1999, the coop began venturing into computer sales and services, where mostly government agencies were their clients. The business transaction was on cash basis only with a small margin of profit to help

From that, the coop took off. The profit earned from the computer business was used to expand and engage in other investments. It added home and office furniture and school and office stationery to supply all their clients' requirements. They were able to accomplish all of these in a span of just five years.

'Carne Ybanag'

Pastor Ross came up with an idea of using the coop's resources that will provide employment for the women-members of the coop and a venue for promoting local products in Tuguegarao City.

It was in the last quarter of 2006 when the coop introduced the famous

Chicha-rabao and other product lines including the "Miss Kara Milk" candy and "Tia Nani peanut brittle".

All of these products are now recognized as the "One Town, One Product" of Tuguegarao City under the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) listings.

This effort helped boost the trade, production, job employment, and tourism in Tuguegarao City.



and protect the consuming public from greedy entrepreneurs.

Arthur B. Tabbu, general manager of Lighthouse Cooperative explained, "When we were starting in the business, our computer clients benefited much. We found out that other suppliers gained profits from Php40,000 to Php50,000 from computers alone which was unfair for the consumers. Since computers are considered high technology equipment, they are capital intensive and so the suppliers then thought that they were the only one who can put up this kind of business."

"But the Lord provided ways for us to put up this business. So what we did was to bring down the prices of the computer to the delight of the consumers," he added.

"We observed that the local markets here were flooded with other regional products and we were surprised to know that in Cagayan, especially in Tuguegarao, nothing special was offered to the consumers," Tabbu said.

"We thought of coming up with a branded *longganisa* that tourists love to buy whenever they visit Tuguegarao. Thus, in September 2004, a local brand for processed meat was born namely *Carne Ybanag*," he added.

Carne Ybanag was named after the Cagayan inhabitants, the Ibanags.

The brand started initially with five products: garlic longganisa, carabeef tapa, tocino nat tuguegarao, hamonado longganisa and spicy carabeef longganisa.

Product development

According to Tabbu, the process of making *Chicha-rabao* originally came from Cebu. It was brought in Luzon and then the Pangasinan migrants shared the knowledge to the residents of Tuguegarao. They are known as *taga-paputok* (popper) of pork or carabao's skin.

Here's how it is made:

Fresh from the slaughterhouse, the carabao's skins are cleaned, chopped to a specific size and then deep-fried in boiling

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by Joahna G. Goyagoy

In the ancient time, Cleopatra was one of Egypt's most renowned women because of her beauty. Legend has it that her silky and lily white skin was due to her constant use of milk for bathing which has natural softeners, moisturizers.

In modern times, Cleopatra's secret has been concretized into bars of soap mainly made up of milk, now popularly known as milk soap.

One such producers of the milk soap are couple Michael "Tj", 34, and Nerly Gonzales, 31, of Baliuag, Bulacan.

According to experts, milk contains proteins which help soften and moisturize

the skin. It also has lactic acid, which contributes to maintaining the skin's natural fairness. Milk is also rich in vitamins A, D, and E which further nourishes the skin. In addition, it has a whitening effect which is brought about by the way it regulates the production of melanin (a natural substance in the skin that causes the skin to darken).

In Bulacan, there is an oasis of milk from dairy carabaos ready for the taking. Aware of this, the couple thought of utilizing the carabao's milk for processing

soap bars whose shelf-life can last for a year or more.

Tj is a member of the San Roque Dairy Farmers Association in Baliuag, Bulacan which was one among the dairy farmers association awarded by the Philippine Carabao Center (PCC) with a 25-dairy buffalo module.

When the farmers started milk production, the couple pondered on other products that can be produced out of this

Kalamilk

softens, moisturizes the skin; fattens the pocket, too



nutrients-rich liquid. It was then that Nerly attended trainings and seminars on herbal soap making while her husband collected more information on soap making from the internet. Convinced that they can be succesful, they decided to go for it.

The couple started experimenting on making soap out of buffalo's milk in May and June, 2010.

They named their product "kalamilk soap"—with the word "kala" from the first syllables of "kalabaw", the Tagalog name for water buffalo. In July, the couple started giving out samples to their neighbors and

CHICHA-RABAO... (from page 11)

oil. This process when continuously done, takes 14-16 hours to complete.

Usually, the *Chicha-rabao* is cooked by batch. The skins are tempered first. It is mixed with a small amount of a hot ingredient into a cold ingredient before adding the entire cold ingredient to the hot ingredient. This way, it helps prevent the cold ingredient from curdling or lumping when it is mixed into the hot ingredient.

This process takes two to three days before achieving the desired texture of the product.

"From the 100 kg of raw carabao's skins, only 30 percent is good for cooking. To supply our need, we ask the supplier to deliver us 30 bags with an average weight of 4 kg per bag. We process about 2,000 kg of skins in a month," Tabbu said.

With packaging and labeling assistance

from the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), *Chicha-rabao* products greatly improved in terms of strategic brand marketing.

Equipment acquired through Small Enterprise Technology Upgrading Program (SET-UP) has helped improve production and food safety. The SET-UP assists small and medium-scale industries through application of science and technology



Couple Michael and Nerly Gonzales with their child Mary Mikanel.

received positive feedbacks about the product. In August, the soap products were out for sale.

Their initial capital was Php20,000. They themselves were surprised about the result of their venture. In just three months, they grossed about Php96,000.

At first, Nerly and Michael targeted production output of 480 to 500 pieces of soap bars per week. Using a networking scheme and targeting high-end markets such as spa and health clinic, the demand for their product gradually increased.

At present, they are producing bulks of orders reaching to a thousand soap bars per week. Their product has reached Pampanga, Tarlac, Nueva Vizcaya, Baguio, Ilocos, Cavite and Alabang.

They buy the milk from their fellow coop members. Very soon, they are

thinking of setting aside a certain percentage of their sales to be used in helping defray school expenses for the farmers' children.

“We do not only aim to help the dairy farmers by providing a ready market for their products but also to help them send their children to school,” says Michael.

What is special about the “kalamilk” soap, the couple said, is that they use essential oil instead of fragrance scent to leave a lasting aroma of the soap into the skin.

“Kalamilk” soap variants include peppermint oil, eucalyptus oil, cucumber extract, papaya green extract, chamomile essential oil, tea tree oil, citronella oil,

lavender essential oil, papaya extract, banana extract, calamansi extract, and rice bran dust.

The couple plans to develop more variants after Michael's trip to Thailand to look for other viable scents which they can use in their product.


In the meantime, because of the yuletide season, they are packaging their “kalamilk” soap as an attractive present to loved ones and friends. They wrap the product in a special paper and ribbons then neatly packed and packed in abaca bag.

The “kalamilk” soap is also available in boxes of 50 bars.

According to Nerly, their packaging depends on the request of the customer which means that the presentation of their product can be customized based on the clients' preference.

Tj and Nerly said that venturing into “kalamilk” soap is a “business without pressure.” They used to have a rice retail store wherein they spend the whole day, leaving them with virtually not enough time for their only child, Mary Mikanel, 6.

Now, aside from the oasis of cash flow from “kalamilk” soap, they also said that it has become a source of bonding for their family.

The best part of it, they said, is that they are able to help the farmers and their children in certain ways. 

“Kalamilk” Soap

Location: Baliuag, Bulacan
Landline: 044-766-0858
Cellphone: 0921-742-9385/0922-838-4651
Email: tj@agriventa.com

services such as technical advisory, patent application, packaging, designing, process improvement and financing.

In 2006, the DOST provided almost Php500,000 fund assistance to boost their expansion of the coop.


Seventy percent of the produced *Chicha-rabao* are distributed in local groceries and supermarkets alone, while the remaining 30 percent are marketed in

pasalubong centers in nearby provinces, Baguio and Manila.

Ten workers for the chicharabao factory are maintained for cleaning, slicing, frying of the skins and packaging. They were trained for Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) and for Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP).

Chicha-rabao was cited as the best “One Town, One Product” (OTOP) in Region

2 last August.

Priced at only Php28 per pack (factory price), the coop's annual gross income for *Chicha-rabao* alone in 2009 was Php5.8 million. It is expected to register Php7 million or more income this year. 

Carne Ybanag Store Lighthouse Cooperatives

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By Dr. Eric P. Palacpac

If there is one person in the Philippines who can vie and win the title “Mr. Candyman”, that person could be Mr. Artemio Teaño, Jr. of Brgy. Baculod, Alcala, Cagayan.

Mang Temy, as he is fondly called, is the proud owner-proprietor of the famous Teaño Alcala Milk Candy (TAMC), which, for over 70 years, has been satisfying the sweet sense of taste of many residents in Cagayan and in other parts of Luzon.

Mang Temy, now in his early 70s, said that his milk candy business traces its roots to his grandmother, *Aling* Mauricia Ponce-Teaño. He recalled that native

later married *Aling* Mauricia’s daughter when he migrated to Cagayan. While the family owns farmlands in Alcala, *Mang* Temy’s father did not like to work in the farm. Instead, he decided to pursue the milk candy business, as pioneered and handed down by Mauricia. Thus, it is through his father that *Mang* Temy learned of the milk candy recipe and business.

In effect, *Mang* Temy is a third generation owner-proprietor of the TAMC.

Milk source

Mang Temy is a plain milk processor and a businessman. He does not own any carabao. He buys milk from milk traders who operate in Cagayan, Isabela and even

suppliers, which is very essential for an entrepreneur who outsources raw materials.

Well-Guarded recipe

Mang Temy is very wary of giving information regarding the ingredients and/or recipe of his milk candies, which is understandable.

“It’s just carabao’s milk and sugar,” he simply said. He personally attends to the mixing of the candy’s ingredients behind closed doors.

He maintains eight workers who do the cooking and packing of milk candies. He said the milk and sugar are just mixed in

The milk candy of Alcala, Cagayan: How sweet it is

carabaos were widespread in Alcala during the 1930s-1940s and that local residents traditionally harvested the milk of these carabaos for home consumption. *Aling* Mauricia thought of buying and utilizing the excess milk in the locality for milk candy processing.

She concocted the recipe for the now famous milk candy bars, as she was fond of cooking rice cakes and traditional sweets. Aided by her daughter and her husband, she formally started the “small” home-based milk candy business in 1938. She started off with ten (gin) bottles, or approximately 3.55 liters, of carabao’s milk. Since then, local residents have been selling for her business around 30 or 40 bottles of carabao’s milk daily.

The well-kept milk candy recipe of *Aling* Mauricia was passed on to *Mang* Temy’s father, who hailed from Mindanao and

in Nueva Ecija.

Currently, he has three major suppliers of fresh milk--- the Dairy Multi-purpose Cooperative, Inc., based in San Pablo, Isabela being delivered by Lito Atara; the Nueva Ecija Federation of Dairy Carabao Cooperatives (NEFEDCCO) in Talavera, Nueva Ecija; and various sources in the Science City of Muñoz and San Jose City in Nueva Ecija being delivered by Felipe Reyes. The milk delivered by the three sources average approximately 3,195 liters, 2,800 liters, and 800 liters a month, respectively.

Mang Temy pays from Php45 to Php50 for every liter of milk delivered to him.

Through efficient and effective quality screening, delivery, collection, payment, and incentive systems, *Mang* Temy, aided by his wife Lournia, was able to maintain good business relationship with the milk

cooking vats, heated, and stirred manually by the workers.

The complete cooking (condensation) process takes a little over an hour. The mixture is then shaped into small rectangular bars, which are individually wrapped in thin papers and placed inside a plastic-sachet package. Each package, containing 12 pieces of milk candies, is sold at Php30.

At the time of the interview, TAMC produces an average of 1,800 packs of milk candies a day, which are easily disposed off.

Sticking to niche marketing

Mang Temy has never advertized his milk candies. Instead, he relies on the time-tested formula of niche marketing.





Couple Artemio and Lourna Teaño

Because the Teaños are the pioneers of this particular product in Cagayan, they have positioned themselves in the market in ways that worked to their advantage. Since 1938, they just focused on one specific product, retained its original recipe, improved and maintained its good quality, targeted the generally sweets-craving populace of Cagayan, and established loyal customers who promoted the product to other people through words of mouth.

The candy has since become a delicacy for these customers and a favorite “pasalubong” of people who visit Cagayan.

Mang Temy’s milk candies are sold right at his residence in Alcala, Cagayan. Most of his buyers are bus passengers or commuters passing by Alcala from Aparri to Manila or vice versa. The buses or other vehicles normally stop at his residence and let their passengers buy packs of milk candies.

Those who buy by the bulk (300 packs or more per visit) actually deliver the product to several grocery stores, bus terminals, and hotels in Tuguegarao City or elsewhere. The Teaños also sell candies at their residence in Mandaluyong City to cater for the Metro Manila buyers.

When asked if he plans to expand his market further, Mang Temy quipped “I have no plans of becoming another Henry Sy. I am satisfied with my current market and have no plans of expanding it, as I don’t like too much stress from work.”



No sibling rivalry

Incidentally, Mang Temy has a younger sister who also operates a milk candy business at her residence in San Gabriel, Tuguegarao City. She is Emma Teaño-Enrile, the owner-proprietor of “Alcala Sweets”.

Emma used to be a bank teller but has decided to quit her former job and ventured into the milk candy business in the early 1990s. Aided by her son Michael, she operates independently from her brother Temy. Because she is a member of the “Teaño” family, she also knows the winning formula-recipe followed by her elders.

Like Mang Temy, she outsources the milk for her processing activities. It is delivered by Domingo Bangayan, a milk collector of the Integrated Farmers Cooperative, and Rosito Maggudayao, an independent milk trader. Both milk deliverers are based at Namabalan Norte, Tuguegarao City.

Emma’s Alcala Sweets carry two milk

candy products which are the regular or plain and peanut-flavored, sold at Php30 and Php35 per pack, respectively.

While the two siblings are both engaged in milk candy businesses, they consider it as a healthy competition between the two of them. Both siblings have established a steady market and loyal customers particularly in many grocery stores, hotels, and other retail outlets in Tuguegarao City.

Quality above all

The success of the TAMC is a result of years of establishing a niche market for carabao’s milk candies in Cagayan. But when asked to identify a specific factor that contributes to the success of his business, Mang Temy simply replied: “It is a matter of quality not quantity.”

“May multiplier effect ang good taste at good quality (The good taste and good quality of the product has a multiplier effect). My customers keep on coming back. Masaya ang pakiramdam ko kung satisfied ang mga customers ko (I feel happy when my customers are satisfied),” he added.


True enough, while there are other milk candy operators in Cagayan that obviously ride on the popularity and pioneering efforts of the Teaños, TAMC and Alcala Sweets have a captured market--- the consuming public who believes that “nothing beats the original”.

Plan

Mang Temy has no plans of diversifying, which is, after all, the essence of niche marketing, or expanding his market in the future.

One thing that he laments about is that he has no second liners who can continue the family’s milk candy business when he and his wife retire. All three of their children are already established professionals (two medical doctors and one dentist) and have no interest in the business.

But who knows? His equally enterprising nephew Michael, currently of Alcala Sweets, can probably fill the gap.

In the meantime, Mang Temy is tasting the ‘sweetness’ of his success from the “sweets” that he produces. 



In Pampanga town

Plantanillas, other delights feature ‘innovating-on-classics’ approach

By **Khrizie Evert M. Marcelo**

In Pampanga, food is a major obsession; the cuisine is flamboyant and sumptuous. As a sugar-producing province, Pampango families sweeten many of their dishes, especially desserts.

The province is well-known for its European-influenced confections, many of which highlight the use of carabao’s milk.

Through the years, many Kapampangans did not falter to call on their natural culinary talent to start their own business. Only a few, however, can

brag of having lasted decades in the local food industry.

In Magalang town, the Carreons take pride in continuing one popular industry for decades.

Hobby turns into business

Now past its 64th year, the Carreon’s Sweets and Pastries remains popular as ever among the locals from Pampanga, nearby provinces, *balik-bayans* and many travelers from different places.

Established by Lourdes Sanchez Carreon in 1946, this pastry shop has

continuously served homemade pastries and superb sweets made from pure carabao’s milk.

Raised from a family with great love and passion for cooking, *Aling* Lourdes never thought that what ought to be just a spare-time hobby would turn out to become a profitable business. Originally, she made sweets and pastries as snacks for their house guests or gifts to friends and families. But since life was difficult then due to the recent World War, she decided to turn it into a business to augment their daily needs.

The small business became popular



Pastillas de leche

Pili tart

Mazapan de pili

Plantanillas

Pastillas haleya
(Pastillas in jar)

with its offerings of *pastillas de leche*, *mazapan de pili*, caramel, *empanaditas* and *yema*. Her sweet delicacies gained a strong following through word of mouth from her avid customers. Soon, she put up her own store and the number of her clients continued to grow throughout the years.

Today, the family business is being managed by her grandson, Francis Joseph Carreon.

Innovating on a classic

Food establishments have to be inventive or they would be left out from others and shut off from diner's consciousness. Innovation is not about a complete change, but about improving or making better what is ordinary. There has to be a tried and tested basis for one to properly innovate. It can be a classic recipe or a flawless technique.

Plantanilla is an authentic Pampango pastry. It is usually a sweet coconut dessert that looks like a mini egg roll encumbered in a tiny crepe-like wrapper made from egg yolk and sugar, filled with *latik* (fried coconut milk curd). Most Pampango families can easily prepare it in their households.

The Carreons, however, offered this classic recipe with a different application.

The crepe batter is done the same way. It is made from the freshest egg yolk which is beaten until thick and frothy. The sugary taste comes from the cane sugar melted with heated water. Instead of filling it with

the usual *latik*, it is served with *pastillas de leche* filling.

The *pastillas de leche* (milk candies) is a sweet and delicious treat, shaped into mini logs made from the most basic ingredient: pure carabao's milk and sugar. In Carreon's way, the *pastillas de leche* is filled inside the crepe in a half-moon shape and arranged in a pretty spiral position.

This sweet delicacy attested by many customers, tastes "divine and heavenly".

Currently, Carreon's offers two types of *plantanillas*: *pastillas*-filled and *latik*-filled. The *latik*-filled, however, is only available on a made-to-order basis.

Other divine delights

Carreon's starts its operation at 6:00 am until 7:30 pm. Milk deliveries start to pour in at this time. About 150 liters of milk are delivered to the shop at Php200 per gallon (approximately four liters). The supply comes mostly from Magalang and the nearby towns of Mexico and Arayat, Pampanga.

Excess delivered milk is pre-cooked and then placed and kept in cold storage until it is needed for processing.

The products produced and offered for sale by Carreon's are homemade delicacies cooked the old fashioned way with natural and local ingredients. These are *pastillas de leche* (wrapped individually

and in bottle), caramel, *mazapan de pili*, *empanaditas*, *yemas*, *pili roll*, *sanzrival*, *ensaymada*, *sylvannas*, *polvoron*, "food for the gods" and chocolate chip cookies.

For over 60 years, Carreon's takes its pride with its favorite *pasalubong*, decidedly its best seller, the *pastillas de leche*. It is a rich paste of carabao's milk cooked slowly over low heat and cane sugar wrapped individually in fringed white *papel de japon*.

It is packed in labeled boxes of 25s and 50s. Recommended to be stored at room temperature, it has a shelf-life of one week and can last for a month if refrigerated.

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One of the most sought-after products of Carreon's is the *mazapan de pili* which is crushed to perfection and combined delightfully into what tastes like a gentle custard.

On a regular basis, Carreon's maintains 80 boxes of *pastillas de leche* for everyday's demand. On special occasions, it prepares 200 or more boxes.

For ultimate indulgence of *pastillas de leche*, the establishment also offers its *haleya*, which is *pastillas* in a jar. It is made from four liters of pure carabao's milk mixed with sugar.

Caramel, the second best-seller, is made from carabao's milk, evaporated filled milk, sugar and cashew nuts.

Empanaditas are caramelized *pastillas* formed into caramel-ish cakes topped with a single cashew or wrapped in short crust pastry for mini-baked "turnover". The crust is made from margarine, flour, sugar filled with mixture of carabao's milk, evaporated milk and sugar.

Mazapan de Pili is made from pili nuts, sugar, milk, potatoes, lime zest and egg yellow food color. Pili nuts are crushed to perfection and combined delightfully into what tastes like a gentle custard. Pili roll is the same with *mazapan de pili* only with a different presentation.

Yema, on the other hand, is also made from carabao's milk, sugar, egg yolks, salt, and egg yellow food color.

When asked, Francis described his Lola's cooking this way: "I often say, it's just a simple style of cooking in a traditional way using basic equipment. The only difference is the passion coming from the heart that make the sweets and pastries more delectable."

According to him, the secret to the Carreon's long-running success is the simplicity and authenticity of its recipes.

Sweet success

If there is one common factor that complements the success of business establishments, it is the inventiveness and responsiveness to new technology which, without a doubt, improve the businesses to where they are today.

Definitely it was Lourdes Sanchez

Carreon who originally popularized Carreon's. Her grandson, Francis Joseph Carreon, added other factors to catapult the Carreon's to its lofty place today.

Francis decided to take over the management of their small family business in 2004. A graduate of Applied Economics in De La Salle University, this 27 year-old businessman shows the dedication, like his Lola, in making his business really click.

Francis, being open to new ideas, sought the help of government agencies such as the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) about products development and promotion.

The DOST helped him upgrade his establishment's equipment and improve packaging to increase the production and sales. He also attended seminars to improve the shelf-life of their products.

DTI shared an avenue in which he can promote and expose their products. This was through trade fairs and exhibits where he was invited to participate. With these interventions, their sales increased by 30 percent.

"In this business, the most pleasant surprise has been the friends, relatives, acquaintances and familiar faces that we see every now and then. It became habitual to them to always go back to our place for years," shared Francis. "Some of them even made it a family tradition to include the Carreon's products as one of their favorite comfort foods and special treat during occasions. It never failed them to bring back childhood memories shared with our delicacies," he added.

He also said that the lasting friendships, family stories and personal memories from the clients have proved to be a valuable source of encouragement to continually serve them.

With the immense popularity of their sweets and pastries, Francis is still hesitant, though, to branch out outside of the province.

"As much as we want to cater to customers outside of our province, it is still difficult for us due to some limitations like the cost of the place, logistics and maintaining the quality and freshness of




Lourdes Sanchez-Carreon (forefront) with her grandson Francis and his mother Elisa.

products since they are highly perishable," said Francis.

"We also want to maintain our products to be home-cooked quality and preservative-free because that is what most customers want," he added.

While missing out a bigger clientele, there are still advantages in operating in the province, he further stressed. The sources of raw materials, like carabao's milk are readily available and the location cost is not a problem since the main outlet stands on the family's property in Magalang, Pampanga.

The management also maintains an open communication to their customers by asking feedbacks for their products and immediately addresses concerns.

Currently, Carreon's maintains 15 workers and three branches in Pampanga--- in San Fernando, Angeles City and in the Marquee Mall (trial run). 

Carreon's Sweets and Pastries

Owner: Francis Joseph Carreon

Location: 472 San Nicolas 1 Magalang Pampanga

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in the Philippines.

The Blue Carabao restaurant has established a mechanism on how to improve its services to keep regular customers coming back and to attract new ones. It also offers free taste for every new dish in its menu and would reimburse payments from unsatisfied customers.

"This business is not just about profit. We appreciate that our customers come back and bring in more people," Mr. Scott said.

Mr. and Mrs. Scott are hands-on managers. They even do the washing of dishes during peak periods which they call "tsunami".

While Mrs. Scott does the cooking, Mr. Scott rises at dawn everyday to make his purchase of 80 kg of freshly cut carabeef and shanks at the Bangkerohan market. He said he commits himself to this task.

"We are serious in providing our customers quality food. We also require the same dedication from our employees. They are given due benefits and we support them in their personal improvement and welfare. We treat them as family members and we make them feel that they are really part of the business. This way, they give back their most valued dedication at work," Mr. Scott said.

Devoted to ensuring the delivery of quality service and most delightful menu, Mrs. Scott, despite her busy day-to-day schedule, attends sessions of culinary classes at the Center for Asian Culinary Studies.

"I am not a professional chef. Everything that I learned about cooking was from my father's and my childhood experience of cooking at home," she said.

Her hard-earned skill, she revealed, has even won for her first prize in the "1st Season Lutong Makro" in 2008 besting 16 other restaurants in Davao City.

"She creates something different that no one has ever tasted," Mr. Scott described of his wife's

creativity.

Coming soon: More delightful treats

Diners will soon see a more beefed up menu board at the Blue Carabao.

Mr. and Mrs. Scott announced that they will soon be adding grilled carabeef and "caraburger" in the menu. Complementing the "caraburger" will be hash browns, mashed potatoes and French fries.

Mr. Scott is also beginning to master the art of preparing "food delights". He is into the "Blue Fire Ice Cream", that tastes spicy and is oozing with the coolness of menthol. This item, Mr. Scott said, has also become hit for diners with adventurous palate.

Mr. Scott described his "baby" as the "coldness of Canada and heat of the Philippines combined in one".

Behind the name


Why the name Blue Carabao?

"That's exactly what we want customers to ask. We want them to be curious about the establishment so that they will be enticed to come and try our food," Mr. Scott said.

In the Blue Carabao website (<http://bluecarabao.com/>), it is elaborately explained that the restaurant exudes the same qualities that the carabao has: friendly, hardworking, reliable, strong and solid. The blue color, on the other hand, is the hue in the color palette that calms and soothes the mind and the body. The same effect is what the Blue Carabao likes to impart to its customers, she said.

The couple said that they aim at providing their customers the best dining experience that they can have while in Davao.

Maintaining an excellent service to customers is a feat itself which should be nurtured well. This is the reason why branching out is not their priority.

For all the good reviews about the eminent Blue Carabao Eatery and Blue Carabao Diner, what stands out is their relationship with diners, a foundation that determines their lofty position in the food business. 

Blue Fire Ice Cream





By Joahna G. Goyagoy

Pastillas de leche is basically a candy made out of milk and sugar. It is rolled into thumb-size pieces, wrapped in white paper and then packed in colorful papers.

The best thing about the *pastillas de leche* is that once popped inside the mouth, the partaker finds the grits of sugar and the slow, gentle melting of it in the mouth and offers a heavenly goodness of pure carabao's milk. It gives not just sweetness but also creaminess and softness of a candy that one would crave for more.

Coming in different varieties, this delicacy in San Miguel town has become an addiction to travelers and most especially to its locals.

A gateway to Nueva Ecija and Cagayan Valley region, San Miguel town is a favorite stopover for travelers who crave for mouth-watering *pastillas de leche* out of carabao's milk.

According to Rafael Payawal, popularly called as "Ka Ape", who is one of the oldest residents in San Miguel, the *pastillas* industry in the town traces its history to the Spanish period.

"San Miguel as an agricultural area has many carabaos. Because of this, people thought of capitalizing on it for other uses aside from farming activities. And so they came up with collecting its milk and developing it into *pastillas*," Payawal said.



Sweets Haven in Bulacan



Due to growing demand, *pastillas* has become on a par with farming as the main livelihoods in San Miguel.

Now, the number of commercial *pastillas* makers is growing. Among these are Ocampo Sweets, Sevilla Sweets, Andrea Sweets, Garcia's and Ricmar's. Their common secret? It's the fresh carabao's milk, which is pasteurized immediately upon delivery and processed into *pastillas* and other products.

The Sevilla and Ocampo sweets products include the following:

Pastillas de leche. Soft and creamy milk candies made of pure carabao's milk and sugar. Available in boxes containing 25 jumbo pieces and plastic bags with 24 smaller pieces.

Flavored pastillas. Pastillas de leche with langka (jackfruit), cheese and ube (purple yam) flavors. These are packed in plastic bags with 24 pieces each.

Assorted pastillas. An assortment of flavors in plastic container, namely; pastillas de leche, pastillas de yema, pastillas de ube, pastillas de langka, and pastillas de keso.

Ube pastillas. Thumb-size morsel rolled in sugar and wrapped in clear cellophane with ube as its main ingredient made tastier with carabao's milk.

Pastillas de yema. A sweet, sticky delicacy made of condensed milk, egg yolk, cheese, sugar and lemon. Available in plastic bags containing 24 pieces.





Pastillas stick. It is composed of 12 sticks of yummy pastillas bound by festive yellow ribbon.

Cheese candy. Consisting of 12 sticks of cheese-flavored candies tied with yellow ribbon.

Other products include special polvoron, polvoron de pinipig, assorted polvoron, assorted macapuno balls, dried fruits, cashew tart, pili tart, lengua de gato, turon de casuy, pacencia white, uraro, and minarka.

Aside from being used as a favorite dessert on the locals' and travelers' tables, the *pastillas* products are also used as a *pasalubong* (present) during special occasions such as birthdays, anniversaries,

weddings and Christmas because of its delicate, colorfully wrapped goodies.

"These milk products continue to live because of the strong patronage of the locals in San Miguel," says Mayor Roderick DG. Tiongson.

In fact, Bulacan celebrated the first Pastillas festival on May 5-7, 2005 which highlighted the importance of *pastillas* in the lives of its locals. According to Mayor Tiongson, the province of Bulacan will set another pastillas festival in May 2011.

In 2008, San Miguel tried its best to be included in the Guinness Book of World Records for producing the "longest pastillas in the world". The efforts involved the use of 12,800 liters of carabao's milk and 1,600 kilos of sugar that produced a 200-meter long, five-inch diameter *pastillas*. The finished product, when cut into pieces, resulted in 500,000 thumb-size pieces morsels.

The effort, though, was not officially recognized due to some reasons.


Nobody can really claim where pastillas has originated.

But according to Caridad Sevilla, her mother-in-law Olympia Sevilla, more popularly known as "Lola Impiyang", was said to be the very first resident of San Miguel who started the pastillas business.

Caridad relates that Lola Impiyang

was then a vendor of coffee with fresh carabao's milk. At the end of the day, she still has overflowing liters of milk. With this in hand, she applied what she has learned from her ancestors, and that is cooking the carabao's milk into pastillas. At first, she would just give it to her neighbors but eventually turned it into a family business when more and more locals became patrons of her pastillas.

Today, more than 200 households in San Miguel are engaged in pastillas-making. They sell their products in the town and other places.

The production of *pastillas de leche* in San Miguel, as a business enterprise, is expected to grow, not wane, as the years go by. 

Sevilla Sweets

39 Old Sta. Rita, San Miguel, Bulacan
Tel: 722-1002

Ocampo Sweets

83 inang Wika st., Malolos, Bulacan
Tel: (044) 791-5657

Ric-mar Sweets

071 Desta Himes subdivision, Atlag, malolos, Bulacan
Tel: (63-44) 791-4433



Aling Nora's 'cheesy' business out of carabao's milk



Aling Nora meticulously prepares her kesong puti purely by hand as she wraps them with banana leaves and gives it with a distinct taste by adding the right mixture of the bahay-asim of cow (abomasal extract).

By Khrizie Evert M. Marcelo

Photos by: Rowena G. Bumanlag

L aguna province offers tourists its rich cultural heritage through its foods, crafts and architecture.

For many tourist and food lovers, however, a trip to this province is not complete without the requisite stop at the hometown of the famous makers of hand-embroidered *barongs* (suits) and local white cheese in the Philippines which is Lumban.

Since the 19th century, Lumban residents have been producing its famous *kesong puti* (white cheese) for its numerous consumers in the province and from different places who fancy its unique taste.

Kesong puti is a fresh, non-aged white and soft cheese made from pure carabao's or buffalo's milk, usually eaten with another *Pinoy* (Filipino) favorite, the *pandesal*. A slight frying of this cheese in a pan for a few minutes can give its taste a twist.

This Filipino fresh cheese is high in protein and low in fat and carbohydrates. It can be served right after it is made or stored for two days at room temperature and even for one week if refrigerated. It can be served grilled, fried, breaded, or as topping on vegetable salads or made into cheesecakes.

Several white cheese makers in the town make huge quantities of it and are retailed by smaller stores. There is one cheese-maker, though, who is popular among the rest--Nora D. Del Valle.

Aling Nora, as she is fondly called, is the eldest child of the family which is the fourth generation of the Del Valle clan which originally made a name for cheese-making in Lumban.

“*Minana pa namin ang paggawa ng kesong puti sa aming mga ninuno. Natuto ang aking ina mula sa aking lola na natuto din sa kanyang nanay. Bata pa lang kami ng aking mga kapatid ay nakagisnan na namin ang aming pamilya sa araw-araw na paggawa nila ng keso* (We inherited the skills in cheese-making from our foreparents. My mother learned it from my grandmother who learned it from her mother. We grew up seeing our family make cheese daily),” Aling Nora said.

Usual Cheesy day

An hour before the day breaks, Robel, nephew of Aling Nora, is already up to prepare his motorbike and the things needed in collecting milk from the dairy farmers of Lumban and nearby towns. He collects milk from his own carabao and from those owned by 30 dairy farmers in Brgy. Wawa, Lumban. Raw milk is priced at Php27 per liter.

Aling Nora, on the other hand, is setting up the materials needed for cheese-making while waiting for the arrival of the raw milk.

“*Alas singko pa lang ng umaga ay iginagayak na namin ang mga kailangan sa paggawa ng keso gaya ng dahon ng saging at mga tingting. Pinupunasan naming mabuti ang mga dahon ng saging at kinakayasan ang mga tingting bago lagyan ng kesong puti* (As early as five o’ clock in the morning, we already prepare the materials for cheese-making like banana leaves and coconut leaf midribs. We clean the leaves and we scrape the coconut leaf midribs before using it for holding the cheese),” Aling Nora said.

From seven to eight o’ clock in the morning, the volume of milk starts to pour in the backyard kitchen of Aling Nora. By this time, Robel has already harvested 50 liters of milk from the milkmen.

What makes Aling Nora’s *kesong puti* different from the others is the traditional



method of *manu-mano* (purely by hand) and the addition of the right mixture of extract from the *bahay-asim* of cow (cow’s abomasum) that give its distinct taste.

The milk is strained in cheesecloth and heated in a stainless casserole for 15 seconds. After it has been cooled in a basin of cold water, the abomasal extract is added. The abomasum is the true stomach of a cow which secretes the enzyme (rennin) that causes the curdling of milk. It is dried first under the sun before it is used.

According to Aling Nora, mixing and straining of the concoction are done only after the abomasal extract has taken its desired effects.

When the white mixture looks exactly the same as the texture of *taho* (curd soy bean), salt is added and strained again to remove the whey (liquid by-product in cheese processing). After this, it is mixed thoroughly by hand.

“The curds are then poured in rows of *halabing* (round molds made of banana leaves) and are allowed to settle for about ten minutes,” Aling Nora explained.

Cheesy business

Aling Nora’s white cheese, as attested by many of her clients, is truly one of a kind. Peak months are from October until January of the following year understandably due to the Christmas and New Year celebrations.


“Our product is bought immediately after it is made. Some of my customers like it freshly made while others wait until the following day before eating it,” Aling Nora disclosed.

The white cheese is made available in packets priced at Php10, Php20 and Php50. Bigger packs are in microwavable plastic ware and are priced at amounts ranging from Php100 to Php400 each.

On ordinary days, Aling Nora averages a net income of Php3,000 and more than Php5,000 during special occasions.

She makes sure that she saves money every day for use as revolving fund for her cheese-making business.

Because of her cheese business, Aling Nora has helped raised her sibling’s children. She was able to send all of them to school and was able to put up her own house from her earnings.

Aling Nora, being thankful and generous, sponsors a small celebration during the feast of their barangay patroness, Santa Milagrosa. This is her way of giving back all the blessings she receives from her cheese-making endeavor. 

D’ Excellent Kesong Puti

Proprietress: Nora D. Del Valle
Location: #1 Rizal St. , Brgy. Maracta, Lumban, Laguna
Tel. No.: 049 4551
Mob. No.: 09295058846/09168413014



Juan Miguel Mercado, owner of "Mr. Moo"



By Rowena G. Bumanlag

Tourist destination, just like the highlands of Tagaytay City in Cavite, lure guests and keep them wanting for a return because of its great deal of attractions packaged in inviting and cozy fashions.

Aside from posh hotels, swimming pools, gardens, and a lineup of adventurous activities that can get tourists occupied in the duration of their retreat, there is also a string of food outlets flaunting exquisite dishes and food items that can be partaken on site or brought home as present.

One of the *pasalubong* outlets that are worth visiting is "Mr. Moo". It is a one-stop dairy corner that offers a variety of products made of milk from cow, carabao and goat.

As one drives to the highland, he or she passes by the two outlets of "Mr. Moo" (in Silang and Tagaytay branches) which are strategically located at the roadside and easily distinguishable with the hot pink store's name. Another outlet is located in Filinvest, Alabang in Metro Manila.

The stalls are actually intentionally put up to serve as take-out counters since tourists and guests usually grab their

It's a moo-ing business for Mr. Moo!

pasalubong (presents) on their way back home.

Proud owners and couple Juan Miguel Mercado, 29, and Charisse, 28, got their idea of putting up the business because of the growing industry of dairying in Los Baños, Laguna where they had their college days.

Juan Miguel finished an agribusiness course and Charisse an economics degree, both at the University of the Philippines-Los Baños (UPLB).

"This business was put up more for helping farmers which is one of our joys," Juan Miguel Mercado said.

The supply of raw milk used for Mr. Moo's products comes from Nueva Ecija, Cavite, Batangas and Laguna.

Eighty percent of the processed products it sells are supplied by the General Trias Dairy Raisers Cooperative in Cavite, a farmers-cooperative mainly supported by the Philippine Carabao Center at UPLB. The others come from the



Katipunan ng Kooperatiba ng Maggagatas in Calauan, Laguna.

"Mr. Moo" offers its customers a wide range of choices from bottled pasteurized fresh milk and its flavored variants to sweets or desserts, dips, milk shakes, cheeses and yogurt. It even offers milk soap.

Among these products, treats made from carabao's milk are the bestsellers—especially to expatriates.

"Products from carabao's milk are more popular to our customers. This can be attributed to the fact that carabao's milk is

more nutritious and creamier compared to cow's and goat's," Mercado said.

"Mr. Moo" has also innovated strategies in pleasing its customers. It packaged *merienda* (snack) combos where customers can easily choose from. For example, one can have a delightful snack time with its three-piece wheat bread and choices of cheese that come with sauces of tomato, garlic, herb tomato, pesto or basil flavors.

Aside from giving ample choices of flavorsome treats, "Mr. Moo" also offers free tasting whenever it introduces a new item in its product line.

"We have also placed a comment box in the store to keep us abreast of our customers' comments. We keep on improving our products and services as our

they get everything they need from the store," Mercado said.

For customers who have to travel for six hours before their *pasalubong* lands on the hands of the recipient, a "Mr. Moo" sales staff neatly packs the items in a used newspaper bag filled with ice tubes.

"We also developed a good relationship with our suppliers to ensure the quality of our products," he added.

"We always impart to them the value of maintaining products quality and we tell them that we will take accountability in what they do for us even if we do not personally watch the process," he said.

"I believe that business is not just about money but more importantly about building partnerships with the people you work with," Mercado shared.

The owners of "Mr. Moo" also establish the same partnership with their employees. They do not treat them as mere helpers but part of a team.

"I tell them that if we do not work together or settle problems that arise, our business will crumble," he said.

Reward and punishment system to encourage employees to perform better is also in effect at "Mr. Moo" establishments.

The "Best Employee of the Month"

huts in Tagaytay area and its branch in South Supermarket-Alabang have gained, "Mr. Moo" owners opted not to open more branches as what other businesses would do once in the limelight.

"It would be difficult and irresponsible for us to open more branches if we cannot meet the demand in the market. We are in no rush in terms of branching out," Mercado said.

"The success of Mr. Moo is a blessing," Noleah Mercado, mother of Juan Miguel, said.

She added that the couple, as they are blessed with a good business, will soon have a child. They don't indulge in unnecessary material things and they respond to their duties and obligations on time.

In the point of view of a customer, albeit unsolicited, the success of a business is the connection and rapport of its products and services to its customers.

For five years in the dairy/food business, "Mr. Moo" has shown passion in its venture of not only advocating for nutrition but nurturing consumers, hence, occupying a niche in its own right.

Perhaps, Mr. Mercado's acumen for business was just a potential waiting to be unleashed in his childhood, as his mother



way of commitment to quality," Mercado said.

There are very few food business outlets that can guarantee absolute product quality to customers. "Mr. Moo" is one rare find among them.

Its sincerity to customers especially in situations when "Mr. Moo" fails to meet their expectations, is beyond reproach.


"As our way of saying sorry to customers, we offer them free product of the same item that they purchased plus some sweets. We establish good relationship with our customer that is why they keep coming back. We make sure that

gets 5 kg of rice while employees who do not have tardiness or absences in their record get an additional Php500 in their salary. The "Best in Sales" and the "Best Employee of the Year" are also selected and rewarded with appliances.

"They are very kind people and generous," Elvie Amoranto, one of Mr. Moo's sales agents said about the Mercado couple. "They are also very understanding, especially when it comes to emergencies in the family. I was proven of their good hearts many times," she added. Amoranto has been serving Mr. Moo for five years now.

Given the popularity that "Mr. Moo"

revealed: "He wanted to be a businessman even when he was in kindergarten."

That potential finds flowering in "Mr. Moo". 

"Mr. Moo" Branches

South Supermarket - Alabang
Ground Level, South Supermarket
Filinvest Ave., Filinvest Corporate City, Alabang
Muntinlupa, Metro Manila, Philippines

Silang, Cavite • (0922) 877 4084

Tagaytay City, Cavite • (0922) 877 4085

Mr. Moo products can also be bought at:

"Blissful Belly", Unit 215, Llanar Bldg.,
77 Xavierville Ave., Loyola Heights,
Quezon City • (0922) 877 4083



Imagine a buffalo horn or hoof hanging on your neck or clipped on your ear as a fashion accessory... what will people think of you?

The use of animal-based accessories started centuries ago when ancient civilizations were just beginning to appreciate the beauty of animals. The most popular was animal skin followed by teeth, nails, and bones. One always wonders how these materials ended up as body accessories.

These materials represented the status of individuals who were considered the best hunters in the community or the leaders of the pack. The more accessories you wore, the higher their community status was. In other words, they were determinants of wealth, respect and dignity.

Today, animal-based accessories are crafted in combination with gold or silver as an added piece of beauty and elegance. This is evident in the now booming buffalo-based materials, which are mainly the horns and hooves.

Started as a creative craftsmanship, horns and hooves of buffalos and cattle were made into practical and trendy fashion accessories. These were transformed into headdresses, earrings, necklaces, bangles and bracelets by a creative and stylistically inclined individual made this possible.

Mr. Arnel T. Papa, owner of the “Arnel T. Papa Jewelry and Accessory Designer”, based in Marilao, Bulacan, uses the big horns and hooves of the buffalo and sometimes cattle which are left as waste materials in slaughterhouses in his craft. A visionary and innovative individual, he makes sure that these materials are not wasted but must be used as materials for creative pursuits. His creations made a niche in the world of fashion combined with glamour and prestige.

Hoof, Horn products boom as high-end fashion business

By Dr. Marlowe U. Aquino



Mr. Papa’s business focuses on quality and elegance. Representing the beauty of the Filipinos, he translates the horns and hooves into carefully crafted accessories which are used by well-known personalities and celebrities here and abroad.

Each of his creation is uniquely processed as a work of beauty and perfection that readily amazes customers and observers of the finished products. As soon as they are worn, they shine like the most expensive gem.

In short, Mr. Papa’s efforts created a new trend in the fashion industry by incorporating indigenous material with touch of gold, silver, copper and other elements. The result is a perfect jewelry material.


Since its initial conceptualization to its recognition, these fashion accessories and jewelry were the sought-after fashion statement of local and international celebrities, actresses and models. They added to the glitter and sparkle of individuals wearing them.

These have been presented and used in the catwalks in Paris, Milan, New York and even the red carpets of Hollywood.

With the increasing appreciation of the buffalo-based fashion accessories, it must also be that the reason why there are such beautifully crafted products is because there is a source. That source is the so-called agricultural beast whose importance has been redefined in another area of business enterprise and industry – fashion and jewelry industries.

Because of its increasing recognition, the Philippine Carabao Center (PCC) has placed the carabao into mainstream development.

Through PCC, it enhances the development program to promote, protect and propagate this animal for meat, milk, draft and hide. With the new business opportunities, the hooves and horns have set and defined a business trend.

With PCC at the realm of the buffalo research and development, it signifies further that the capability of individuals could be supported and enhanced. The buffalo-based fashion accessories truly signify a booming and luxurious enterprise for all interested individuals, particularly Filipinos, who are creative, artistic, enterprising and have the heart for uniquely owned local resource. 



Sen. Francis “Kiko” Pangilinan emphasized in his speech the importance of solving farmers’ issues for the agriculture sector to actually progress during the carabao farmers’ dialogue held at the Philippine Carabao Center National Headquarters and Gene Pool in the Science City of Muñoz last November 5.

Senator Pangilinan is guest of honor, speaker in carabao farmers’ dialogue

By Rowena G. Bumanlag

Sen. Francis “Kiko” Pangilinan, chair of the Senate committee on agriculture and fisheries, graced a farmers’ forum participated in by smallholder-dairy carabao raisers in Nueva Ecija conducted at the Philippine Carabao Center (PCC) National Headquarters and Gene Pool in the Science City of Muñoz last November 5.

In his speech, Senator Pangilinan emphasized the importance of solving farmers’ issues for the agriculture sector to actually progress.

“Hindi po natin kayang sugpuin ang kahirapan kung hindi natin haharapin ang mga problema sa sektor ng agrikultura. Pagsama-samahin po natin ang ating mga kakayahan upang sama-sama din po tayong umusad patungo sa tagumpay (We cannot alleviate poverty if we will not give our full attention in solving the problems in the agriculture sector. Let us altogether pool our efforts and capabilities so that we can achieve success as one),” Senator Pangilinan said.

He also said that ensuring the success of farmers is one key move for the development of agriculture in the country.

With the theme *“Kalabaw ko, yaman ko... handog sa pamilya ko”*, the forum was attended by about 200 carabao raisers.

Department of Agriculture Undersecretary for Special Concerns Bernadette Romulo-Puyat and PhilRice executive director Atty. Ronilo Beronico also graced the forum.

“The forum was primarily conducted as

a venue for smallholder-dairy carabao raisers to freely discuss their issues and pressing concerns,” Wilma del Rosario, the PCC National Impact Zone program coordinator, said.

Also highlighted in the forum were discussions on questions raised by champion dairy carabao owners Engr. Jaime Ramos of Talavera, Marcelino Misleng of San Jose City and Belinda Parugrug of Science City of Muñoz.

Ramos voiced out the concern of dairy farmers on the possibility of losing much of the rates of duty on imported milk products as a result of schemes on ASEAN free trade.

He solicited for a stronger government support, through USec Puyat and Senator Pangilinan, in protecting the stake of dairy farmers in terms of extending the tariff that is currently imposed by the government with an equivalent of 1 to 3 percent of the value of imported dairy products.

“Sana ay ipagpatuloy ang 3 percent na buwis sa mga imported milk at milk products at sa halip na tanggalin ay gamitin na lamang ito para sa development ng local dairy industry lalo na sa infusion ng dairy animals (We are hoping that the current 3 percent tariff imposed on imported milk and milk products be continued and instead of eliminating, this tariff should be used for the development of the local dairy industry particularly in the infusion of dairy animals),” Ramos said.

“Hindi namin kayang lumaban sa mga malalaking kumpanya. Kailangan namin ng siguradong espasyo sa merkado para maipagpatuloy namin ang aming napiling hanap-buhay (We cannot compete with multi-

million companies. We need an assured niche in the market for us to be able to survive with our chosen livelihood),” he added.

Senator Pangilinan responded positively to this concern. He pledged to support the appeal and promised to allocate funding for the dairy industry.

“Please submit a formal position paper on this and we will deal with it as soon as we can,” he said.

Misleng, on the other hand, shared his experience during an educational tour in Thailand saying that the Thai government was able to put in place a stable support system and marketing mechanism for its local dairy industry. He asked whether the Philippine government can replicate such effort in support to Filipino dairy farmers.

He also shared the plan of his cooperative to implement a milk feeding program in Nueva Ecija that will ensure income for the dairy carabao farmers and good nutrition among school children.

USec Puyat responded to this by saying that Agriculture Secretary Proceso Alcala will be informed of this move and that farmers can already count on the full support of the DA in this endeavor.

Meanwhile, Parugrug, leader of a group of housewives who pinned new hope on the buffalo, asked how the government can help them have access to financing schemes. She said that access to soft loans would be a big help for the dairy farmers as funds are much needed for the purchase of facilities such as milking machine and to finance the marketing aspect of their production.

USec Puyat informed the farmers that there is Republic Act (RA) 10000 which provides for an agriculture and agrarian reform credit

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KOICA, PCC to implement \$3 million-worth of livestock development project

By Rowena G. Bumanlag



KOICA resident representative Jinoh Kim and Agriculture Undersecretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat (center) shows here the signed ROD documents. Looking on were PCC executive director Dr. Libertado Cruz (left) and Senator Francis Pangilinan (right).

The records of discussions (ROD) regarding the formal initiation of a US\$3 million grant-in-aid project on “Enhancing Livestock Sector Performance in the Philippines” by the Korean government, were signed by representatives of the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and the Department of Agriculture (DA) last November 5.

KOICA resident representative and implementation survey team leader Jinoh Kim and Agriculture Undersecretary for Special Concerns Bernadette Romulo-Puyat signed the ROD documents. Senator Francis Pangilinan and Philippine Carabao Center (PCC) executive director Dr. Libertado Cruz witnessed the signing ceremony.

The project, when finalized, will be jointly implemented by KOICA and the PCC.

The Philippine government’s counterpart to the project is the mobilization of resources and personnel. It will allocate funds for the delegation of technical personnel, equipment and materials.

The project, which will be implemented

for a period of three years, aims to establish an institutionalized electronic data capture system that will hasten genetic data evaluation and analysis and create a unified web-based genetic information system.

It shall also intensify artificial insemination (AI) service and the use of embryo technologies that will aggressively enhance propagation of superior animals. This will be actualized through the improvement of the PCC National Bull Farm and Semen Laboratory in Carranglan, Nueva Ecija.

Cryobanking is another aspect that will be improved through the provision of relevant equipment to allow the conservation of selected livestock species that will sustain a long-term genetic improvement program.

Another component of the project is enhancing the competencies of PCC scientists along the disciplines of breeding, genomics, bioinformatics, biotechnology and related fields through trainings on advanced technologies in Korea.

Dr. Liza Battad, PCC chief for Planning and

Special Projects, said that the signed ROD will be submitted to the KOICA headquarters in Seoul then returned to the Philippines for the final discussion on the details of the implementation plan with the KOICA technical team and the PCC.

Dr. Battad said that the project will be formally launched after the signing of the Note Verbales between the embassies of Korea and the Philippines, which is expected to be initiated before year-end.

She emphasized the complementary effects of the project to the overall national genetic improvement program.

“By improving efficiencies and establishing a systematic performance evaluation, genetic gains will trickle down to the farmers’ level through increased milk production, animal holdings and, thus, family income,” she said.

“These effects may only be felt toward the end of the project but what remains important is the stream of outcomes supporting the local livestock industry development. These include, among others, generation of rural incomes, employment, and better rural family conditions,” she added.

KOICA is an agency of the government of Korea that extends assistance to developing countries through development cooperation efforts that carry the goals of achieving sustainable socio-economic development, poverty alleviation and promotion of humanitarian assistance and human security.

Senator Pangilinan... /from page 27

and financing system through banking institutions.

RA 10000, also known as “The Agri-Agra Reform Credit Act of 2009”, stipulates that all banking institutions should set aside at least 25 percent of their total loanable funds for agriculture and fisheries credit.

Through this scheme, USec Puyat added, farmers will have an equal access to opportunities that will maximize their productivity and thus sustain their economic growth.

Other questions raised during the farmers’ forum concerned rice seed subsidy, importation, regulating the price of palay and farmers’ access to postharvest facilities. They were aptly answered by Executive Director Atty. Ronilo Beronio of the Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice) and Deputy Director Arnel Apaga of the Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization (PhilMech).



Department of Agriculture Secretary Proceso J. Alcala delivers his message during the opening ceremony in celebration of the 2010 National Biotechnology Week held at the SM Mall of Asia in Pasay City last November 22.

2010 National Biotechnology Week Celebration

Aggie chief's message is about ensuring biosafety

By Rowena G. Bumanlag

The outputs of biotechnology and current researches that greatly influence people's way of life at this modern age, bannered this year's National Biotechnology Week (NBW) in which its prime celebration was held at the SM Mall of Asia, Pasay City from November 22 to 28.

The event ensured continuing public awareness, education and understanding of biotechnology as an essential component of national development as stipulated in Presidential Proclamation No. 1414. The proclamation, signed by then President Gloria-Macapagal Arroyo on November 9, 2007, declared every last week of November of every year as "National Biotechnology Week".

In the opening ceremonies held last November 22, Agriculture Secretary Proceso J. Alcala, who was the 2010 NBW celebration chair, said that biotechnology is part of his advocacy in promoting modern yet eco-friendly technologies for the benefit of stakeholders in the agriculture sector.

"I will make sure that no agriculture products will reach the hands of our stakeholders unless they have passed biosafety standards. Biotechnology should provide opportunities to stakeholders within the paramount objective of attaining safety and sustainable development," Secretary Alcala said.

He also left a challenge to the Filipino biotech community: "Continue to spearhead the development and promotion of biotech products that are morally and socially acceptable—one that ensure the health and safety of humans, animals and the environment".

Secretary Alcala's co-chair was Secretary Ramon J.P. Paje of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

The week-long celebration, which adopted last year's theme "Bioteknolohiya para sa Kalikasan, Kalusugan, Kagandahan, Kabuhayan at Kaunlaran", with sub-theme "Ok ang 5K sa Biotech: Pagyamanin, Ito ay Atin!", focused on the products of biotechnology that were showcased in the exhibits set up in the open areas of the Nido Fortified Science Discovery Center and IMAX 2/F.

Participants to the exhibit were the different government agencies that are implementing and carrying a biotechnology program, pharmaceutical companies and other private companies promoting their biotech products.

Various fora on biotechnology topics were also conducted. Other activities in the NBW celebration included the giving of the Jose G. Burgos Awards for Biotech Journalism, which recognized members of the media whose work particularly focused on biotechnology or

those who have been "pushing the frontiers of scientific inquiry".

With the purpose of promoting researches on biotechnology, public research institutions were encouraged to submit their entry to the "Technology Presentation Contest" where promising agricultural biotechnologies were promoted. The presentations highlighted the beneficial impact of biotechnology in improving agricultural productivity and increasing farmers' income.

Winners of the technology contest received Php100,000 for the first prize in the category "Best Technology Kiosk", Php60,000 for the second prize and Php30,000 for the third prize. Winners for the category "Best Technology Presenter", on the other hand, received a cash prize of Php50,000 for the first prize, Php30,000 for the second prize and Php10,000 for the third prize.

Film showing on the importance of biotechnology in nation-building was held toward the end of the celebration. This was organized for the public to have a popular knowledge on the many benefits that a person gets from its application.

Hosted this year by the DA, through its Biotechnology Program Office headed by Dr. Candida B. Adalla, co-organizers of the celebration included the Departments of Education (DepEd), Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Health (DOH), Interior and Local Government (DILG), Science and Technology (DOST), Trade and Industry (DTI) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED).

The event was sponsored by CroLife Philippines, Department of Agriculture-High Value Commercial Crops Program (DA-HVCC), Monsanto, Pioneer Hi-Bred Philippines and the SM Mall of Asia.



Dr. Libertado Cruz delivers his keynote speech during the “Livestock Biotechnology Advocacy Forum for Media Representatives” at the SM Mall of Asia (SM MOA) IMAX 2/F last November 22.

PCARRD, PCC conduct livestock biotech forum for media representatives

By Rowena G. Bumanlag

In response to the request of media representatives to have a deeper understanding on animal biotechnology research and development, a “Livestock Biotechnology Advocacy Forum for Media Representatives” was conducted at the SM Mall of Asia (SM MOA) IMAX 2/F last November 22.

The forum was one of the activities in the celebration of the National Biotechnology Week at the SM MOA from November 22-28 sponsored by the Philippine Council for Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources Research and Development-Livestock Research Division (PCARRD-LRD). Co-sponsor of the affair was the Philippine Carabao Center (PCC).

PCC executive director Dr. Libertado Cruz served as the resource speaker. His presentation focused on the potentials of livestock biotechnology in the Philippines, current applications of livestock biotechnology, and future considerations on biotechnology application.

Dr. Cruz’ presentation underscored the importance of biotechnology in the social program of the government to help farmers earn additional income through livestock-based livelihoods.

Improving the genetics of swamp buffaloes to produce more milk through reproductive biotechniques as anchored on the national genetic improvement program is one of the steps of the government to realize this goal, Dr. Cruz stressed.

He said that the Philippines spends about \$720 million for imported meat and milk products, making foreign farmers even richer

and the Filipino farmers in arrears.

Through advances in animal biotechnology research and development, livestock farmers are provided opportunities to earn more income out of owning genetically-improved animals that offer higher productivity, he said.

However, application of biotechnology in agricultural production in the country is not yet fully adopted, which can be attributed to the lack of information dissemination about the technology, thus, the conduct of the advocacy forum, he further said.

In his message delivered by PCARRD-LRD director Dr. Edwin Villar, PCARRD executive director Dr. Patricio Faylon said, “In this modern time, it is most urgent to discuss, understand, promote and apply outputs of high-end research to be able to achieve significant improvements in livestock productivity in order to meet the increasing demand for livestock and poultry products.”

“I believe that a good understanding and appreciation of animal biotechnology by our media representatives would motivate them to promote modern biotechniques that will empower our animal raisers to shift from the traditional subsistence production system to profitable enterprises,” he added.

LRD assistant head Dr. Synan Baguio said that the forum was organized to create a venue for media to interact with the guru of animal biotechnology in the Philippines and hopefully develop an informed opinion about the topic.

About a hundred representatives from various media outfits and several private individuals participated in the forum.

PCC scientists are PSAS awardees

By Joahna G. Goyagoy

Two scientists of the Philippine Carabao Center (PCC) bagged awards during the 47th Scientific Seminar and Annual Convention of the Philippine Society of Animal Science (PSAS) held last October 20-22 at the Grand Regal Hotel in Davao City.

Dr. Edwin C. Atabay’s paper on “Production of Nuclear Transfer Buffalo Embryos Using oocytes from ovaries stored at low temperature” was adjudged “Best Paper in Animal Biotechnology”.

Dr. Lerma C. Ocampo, on the other hand, won the “Best Scientific Poster”. She based her poster from her study titled “Ultra Rapid Vitrification of Germinal Vesicle Stage Bovine Oocytes by the Cryoloop Method”.

Dr. Atabay and Dr. Ocampo are senior science research specialists of PCC.

The convention, with the theme “Refocusing Animal RD&E towards the Changing Needs of the Industry”, highlighted the presentation of scientific papers and posters of various scientists and researchers.

The scientific studies were classified in different disciplines such as: anatomy, physiology and biochemistry, biotechnology, diseases and diagnostics, medicine and surgery, nutrition, production and processing, and socio-economics. A total of 44 scientific papers and five technical posters were presented during the seminar-convention.

The annual PSAS convention gives due recognition to the important contributions of scientists and their researches in the advancement of the animal industry, thus benefiting animal raisers and other industry stakeholders.

PSAS is a professional not-for-profit organization founded in 1963 by 31 veterinarians and animal scientists. Currently, it has almost 4,000 members which consists of veterinarians, animal scientists, researchers, academe, agricultural economists, animal nutritionists, agricultural extension providers, industry representatives supporting livestock and poultry production, livestock and poultry raisers, farm managers, laboratory personnel and like-minded government personnel in the country.

Meanwhile, the PCC delegation, composed of 12 researchers, was led by Dr. Eucrofina P. Atabay, PCC supervising senior science research specialist and also a council member of PSAS.

PCC, NDA sign MOU with Korea on dairy cattle improvement

By Rowena G. Bumanlag

A cooperative project on dairy cattle improvement, which will be implemented by the Department of Agriculture through the Philippine Carabao Center (PCC) and the National Dairy Authority (NDA), was officially forged with the Republic of Korea through its National Agricultural Cooperative Federation (NACF) Dairy Cattle Improvement Center (DCIC).

The MOU was signed last October 7 by the respective representatives of the cooperating parties: DCIC general manager Ki-Man Ryu, PCC executive director Dr. Libertado Cruz and NDA administrator Grace Cenas.

The cooperation aims to promote and develop the dairy cattle using the resources and expertise and manpower of the DCIC, PCC and NDA.

This shall be made possible through mutual assistance in the areas of research, technology development and transfer, education and personnel training.

Specifically, the cooperative project shall cover the following activities:

- exchange of technical staff, researchers and fellows;
- joint research activities; participation in seminars, scientific and technical meetings;
- exchange of training materials, research papers and relevant information training;
- mutual cooperation for dairy cattle semen trade; and
- other activities to be agreed upon by the parties.

The MOU has a term of one year and shall be automatically renewed for another year with the mutual consent of the cooperating parties.

PCC official presents paper at AGREX '10

By Rowena G. Bumanlag

Dr. Eric Palacpac, chief of the Knowledge Resource Management Division (KRMD) of the Philippine Carabao Center (PCC) presented a paper in the 2010 International Conference on Agricultural Extension (AGREX '10) in Selangor, Malaysia last October 25-29.

With the theme "Empowerment of agri-food stakeholders in facing global challenges toward sustainability", AGREX '10 aimed to provide a platform for learning and discussion on agricultural extension and enhance effort on the importance of empowerment of agri-food stakeholders in facing global challenges toward sustainability and facilitate cooperation among key agri-food stakeholders in the areas of agricultural extension and development.

Dr. Palacpac's paper titled "Enhancing the Human Capital of Smallholder-Farmers in the Philippines: The Case of the National Impact Zone Program" focused on describing and analyzing the capability-building initiatives by the PCC toward empowering the farmer-cooperators in Nueva Ecija under the National Impact Zone Program.

Plenary and parallel sessions on various scholarly topics related to agricultural extension highlighted the international gathering.

The papers for presentation or parallel sessions were categorized into: agricultural institution, systems and delivery model; extension policy, program and strategic planning; ICT extension; professionalism of extension agents; agro-community, poverty alleviation and rural development (where Dr. Palacpac's paper was categorized under); new technology applied for future extension; and entrepreneurship, one village one product (OVOP), one district one industry (ODOI) and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) development.

The AGREX '10 was organized by the Center for Extension, Entrepreneurship and Professional Advancement (APEEC) of the Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) based in Selangor.

About 200 agricultural extension practitioners, academicians, researchers and students from Malaysia, Iran, Thailand, India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Australia, Netherlands, Japan, UK, US, and the Philippines participated in the biennial event.

Another 'Hall of Fame' award for PCC editorial consultant

Another feather has been added to the cap of Dr. Anselmo Roque as the Philippine Council for Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCARRD) bestowed on him a "Hall of Fame Award".

He was cited for having won three times in the annual search for the PCARRD Professional Media Award (print category).

The awarding rites were held at the Dusit Thani Hotel last November 15 in connection with the 38th anniversary celebration of PCARRD.

The "Hall of Fame" trophy was signed by PCARRD executive director Patricio Faylon and Secretary Mario Montejo of the Department of Science and Technology.

Main part of the citation of the award reads:

"In recognition of his prolific contribution to the dissemination, popularization, and promotion of agricultural technologies of the Central Luzon Agriculture and Resources Research and Development Consortium in print media. The high quality of his works earned him first place in print category of the Professional Media Award in 1997, 2000, and 2001, a feat that has set a precedence in the award, setting the standards for science journalism in the National Agriculture and Resources Research and Development Network".

Dr. Roque, a correspondent of the Philippine Daily Inquirer, is currently editorial consultant in the Applied Communication Section of the Philippine Carabao Center (PCC).

It was the third "Hall of Fame" award received by Dr. Roque in his writing career. The other two, one of which was given last April, were given by the Philippine Agricultural Journalists, Inc. for being an outstanding agricultural journalist in English and in Pilipino.



The Philippine Carabao Center at the University of Southern Mindanao is now coming out with various products out of the carabao's hoof and horn. Some of their finished products are key chains, purse, bracelet, and materials for display shown in above photos. (Photos by RGBumanlag)