



PHILIPPINE TOBACCO NEWS

ISSN-0116-4183

a bi-monthly publication of the NATIONAL TOBACCO ADMINISTRATION

Volume VIII * No. 4

www.nta.da.gov.ph

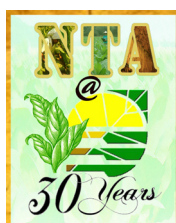
July - August 2017



TGY awarding: (L-R) NTA Director Rodolfo F. Salanga, DA Undersecretary Segfredo R. Serrano, Abra Branch Manager Esmeralda G. Valera, Administrator Robert L. Seares, Outstanding Extension Worker Marife P. Peralta, TGY Awardee Alvin B. Bilgera, Deputy Administrator for Operations Atty. Mel John I. Verzosa, and ULPI President Winston P. Uy; and agency officials, employees and guests in attendance.



(L-R) Administrator Seares, USec. Serrano, Deputy Administrator Verzosa, and cultural dance presentation by selected NTA employees.



NTA marks 30th year

THE National Tobacco Administration, the sole government agency mandated to administer and regulate the local tobacco industry, has been looking after the interest and welfare of tobacco growers in the past three decades.

It has implemented programs and projects aimed at improving the economic and living conditions and raise the quality of life of the farmers and those who depend on the industry for their livelihood.

On July 24, NTA celebrated its 30th anniversary—the commemoration of three decades since the agency was founded after the merger in 1987 of eight distinct government agencies that dealt with the tobacco industry.

The 30th Anniversary program, attended by central office employees, branch managers, branch awardees, guests from the private sector, and farmers, was held at the NTA Central Office quadrangle in Quezon City, on July 28.

Also in attendance during the culminating program were two former administrators, Alonzo Q. Ancheta (1987-1990) and Edgardo D. Zaragoza (2010-2017), and officers

of the National Federation of Tobacco Farmers Associations and Cooperatives (NAFTAC).

The program was highlighted by the awarding of the outstanding tobacco growers and extension workers, fellowship night where retirees and long-serving employees (30 years and above in service) were recognized, the conduct of a talent search dubbed “NTA’s Got Talent,” and awarding of winners of the annual sportsfest.

“This 30th anniversary marks the milestone of our achievements as an agency, as well as the celebration of our past and present employees, our tobacco farmers, and other industry stakeholders who have been with us since our foundation day,” Administrator Robert L. Seares said.

The theme of the celebration, “*Ak-mang Serbisyo Tungo sa Makabuluhang Pagbabago*,” explains the vision of the current leadership as “we transform our

agency into an instrument of change through dedicated service for our stakeholders, especially our tobacco growers,” according to Administrator Seares.

“NTA will continue to rein the industry to where it should be,” he said, as he enjoined the stakeholders “to achieve our goals for the next 30 years or so.”

Deputy Administrator for Operations Atty. Mel John I. Verzosa emphasized “*serbisyo at pagbabago* (service and change)” in his welcome remarks. “Both of which can only be motivated by the individual public servant, through an honest service, guided by the NTA mission and vision to improve the quality of life for tobacco farmers and all stakeholders through increased productivity and other income-generating activities,” he said.

He encouraged government workers

Pls turn to page 2

EDITORIAL

NTA turns 30

IN 1987, President Corazon C. Aquino, consolidated eight separate, but interrelated, state tobacco agencies into one, the National Tobacco Administration (NTA), by virtue of Executive Order No. 116 (Reorganization of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food), which was implemented by Executive Order 245, its charter, entrusting same with the mandate, “to improve the economic and living condition and raise the quality of life of the farmers and those who depend on the industry for their livelihood” and “to promote the balanced and integrated growth and development of the industry to help make agriculture a solid basis for industrialization.”

Represented by pearl, symbolizing purity of intention and prosperity, among other precious traits, the NTA, in its 30th anniversary, accorded fitting recognition to all the officials and employees who have dedicated their services through all these years, whose concerted efforts in implementing the programs and projects have enabled the Agency’s continuing attainment of its purposes and objectives; and, the tobacco farmers who have contributed to the development of the industry by setting good examples to their fellow farmers through the annual recognition of Tobacco Grower of the Year for the different tobacco types/sub-types at the provincial level and, subsequently, as national winners.

The pearl serves as a challenge to the NTA workforce to continue doing their duties and responsibilities with purity of purpose and honesty in consonance with the anniversary theme, “**Akmang Serbisyo Tungo sa Makabuluhang Pagbabago.**” Such work attitude will surely strengthen the NTA in facing the challenges of the tobacco industry, to ensure that the tobacco farmers will be equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills conducive to a profitable farming and other income generating ventures. Its **ISO 9001:2008 Certification**, with its successful hurdling of the first surveillance audit conducted by the SGS just before the NTA anniversary, has proven that the NTA abides with its commitment towards ensuring continuing enhancement of its services to clients.

The NTA looks forward to more laudable feats as it moves towards another milestone, its 40th anniversary. *Mabuhay ang NTA!* 🍀

NTA marks 30th year... from page 1

and partners of the industry to use their skill and experience to adapt to the changes and find new alternatives and purpose. “In the months ahead, we are going to have plenty of opportunities to discuss in more details the goals and strategic direction of our organization,” he added.

Commitment from stakeholders

Department of Agriculture (DA) Undersecretary Segfredo R. Serrano, who represented DA Secretary Manny F. Piñol in the event, assured the NTA of the department’s support in international conventions on tobacco control, and its engagement with Congress and other fora that deal on matters about the industry. “Ang Department of Agriculture ay kasama at kabalikat ng NTA sa pagtatanggol at pagbibigay ng proteksion sa interes ng ating industriya ng pagtatabako,” he said.

He called for a balanced approach for the industry. “Ang simpleng hiling lang natin ay ang diskusyon sa industriya patungkol sana sa economic rights ng mga magsasaka, at hindi lang yung health aspect,” he said.

While he acknowledged the effort of some government agencies for the abolition of tobacco production in their effort to curb smoking in the country, he agreed that “hindi naman nagiging illegal o krimen ang paninigarilyo o pagtatabako.”

USec Serrano considers tobacco production as a very important pillar in the country’s culture, particularly the people in Ilocos, where the tobacco and the industry have become the hallmark of the northern provinces.

NAFTAC President Mario E. Cabasal commended USec Serrano for his stand on the tobacco industry. “This has inspired us to go on with our farming venture and hope for a better harvest and better future of our farmers, their families, and communities,” he said.

ULPI President Winston P. Uy, in his message, urged industry leaders to work together to create a new future for the tobacco industry in which “we create a higher standard of the best practices.”

“We hope that one day we will have a tobacco industry where people can really say ‘*dapat gayahin ninyo ang tobacco industry*’ for all the good things it brings to the country,” said Uy.

He urged stakeholders to provide more livelihood to the farmers, giving more justice for the use of tobacco, as he called for a proper roadmap for the industry that is market-driven and will lead to a better future for the tobacco growers.

Roman Militsyn, President of PMFTC, in his message read by Christine Dela Cruz, Manager of Sustainability and Contributions, also expressed the



CABASAL



UY



is published bi-monthly by the Department of Agriculture
National Tobacco Administration
 Scout Reyes cor. Panay Ave., Quezon City, Tel. Nos. 3743987. Fax: 3732095. Website: www.nta.da.gov.ph.

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Left photo: Ethnic dance performed by Ma. Mercedes M. Ayco and Nelly G. Alba of FTSD is awarded Third Place during the "NTA's Got Talent" at the Fellowship Night; Top photo: Administrator Seares and the managers of the different departments and branch offices join the Zumba dance during the Employees' Day on July 28.

continuous support of the private sector to the different programs and projects of the agency, such as the improvement of the quality of tobacco, drip irrigation/fertigation for areas with enough ground water sources and small water impounding projects for areas with none or minimal water source, robust NTRM elimination program to reduce crop rejection rate, and standard curing barn for flue cured tobacco.

"Today the industry is facing so many challenges, both local and international; locally we have regulatory and fiscal challenges, as well as illicit trade and reputational. The country now also has to start figuring out the impact that the ASEAN integration will have on the general agriculture sector," Milityn said.

He is hopeful that under the stewardship and leadership of Secretary Piñol and Administrator Seares, the local tobacco industry will weather the storms and prosper.

Employees' Day and Fellowship Night

The 30th Anniversary program was preceded by day-long Employees' Fun Day, highlighted by a Zumba, Bingo and Parlor Games, and Thanksgiving Mass officiated by Rev. Fr. Alfredo A. Sabado, SVD, at the NTA Quadrangle.

Fellowship night, hosted by Neyo E. Valdez and Marissa J. Alvero, followed

after the culminating program and TGY awards.

As highlights of the fellowship night, the agency handed out special recognition to 20 retirees for 2017, a certificate plus cash bonus to 126 employees who have served for at least 30 years in government service with the tobacco industry (see related story on **page 5**), and cash prizes for the winners of the different sports events spearheaded by the NTA Employees Association.

Leah C. Fiesta, Secretary I of the Corporate Planning Department, bested nine other contestants to win the Grand Champion of the first "NTA Got Talents," a talent competition among different departments and branch offices. The Selected Dancers of the Regulation Department and the Dance Duo of Ma. Mercedes M. Ayco and Nelly G. Alba, both TPRO III of the Farm Technology and Services Department, were second and third place winners, respectively.

Adjudged Best Dressed during the night were Administrative Department Manager Dr. Cristina C. Lopez and Atty. Verzosa. Best Dancers, selected by the Dance Instructors during dance numbers with the live band, were Ms. Sesy Guzman Seares, wife of Administrator Seares, and Elarde M. Marzan, Reproduction Machine Operator II of the Administrative Department.

Celebrations at the Branch Offices

The Provincial Branch Offices also had their own celebrations of the 30th Anniversary.

The Abra Branch employees had a lunch picnic at Villa Francisco in Lagangilang, Abra on August 15.

According to Branch Manager Esmeralda G. Valera, the staff had a chance to relax and bond with each other, and build a stronger camaraderie among them, and to withstand all the challenges of the tobacco industry while serving the tobacco farmers.

The Candon Branch held their celebrations at the conference room of the Branch Office in Candon City. Highlights of the activities were a eucharistic celebration, parlor games, sumptuous lunch, and a simple tribute program to the retirees Benson B. Cariño and Feliza D. Directo, both Senior TPRO, Renato C. Aquino, Supervising TPRO, and awarding of certificates to those who have served government service for at least 30 years.

The La Union Branch also held their celebration at the Branch Office in Bauang, La Union on July 25, or three days earlier than the culminating program at the Central Office. The employees attended the Holy Mass to start the celebration, marked with

Pls turn to page 5

New NTA QA lab blessed

REV. Fr. Alfredo A. Sabado, SVD, led the blessing of the NTA Quality Assurance and Laboratory Building at the NTA Central Office in Quezon City.

The blessing of the new building, which was one of the highlights of the 30th Anniversary celebration of NTA, was attended by Administrator Robert L. Seares, Deputy Administrator for Operations Atty. Mel John I. Verzosa, Members of the NTA Governing Board, Department heads, Branch Office managers, and special guests: Segfredo R. Serrano, Undersecretary for Policy and Planning of the Department of Agriculture, and former NTA Administrator Alonzo Q. Ancheta.

The three-story building will house the Quality Assurance (QA) facilities and analytical laboratory services and the Leaf Grading and Classification Training Room. It will provide (1) the chemical analysis of tobacco in support to projects on Quality Assurance, Technology Assessment and Protocol



Research; and (2) physical characterization of tobacco products and the determination of components in tobacco smoke.

NTA maintains three other laboratories: the Soils and Water, Seed, and Product Development Laboratories, all located in Batac City. 🌱

TGY provincial winners recognized

THE NTA honored 17 tobacco growers for showing exemplary efforts in tobacco production. The awarding ceremony was held during the culminating program of its 30th Anniversary celebrations on July 28 at the NTA Central Office quadrangle in Quezon City.

The provincial winners were adjudged Branch winners for each tobacco type for the TGY Provincial Category in their respective areas.

The contest recognizes the continuing efforts of tobacco growers who show innovativeness, efficiency, compliance with Good Agricultural Practices, and protect the environment and demonstrate application of science and technology-based knowledge, during production and getting the maximum income from their labor.

This year's TGY provincial awardees, for crop year 2015-2016, for each category, are:

Virginia: Edgardo P. Gabbac (Camaningan, Batac City), Alvin B. Bilgera

(Agtangao, Bangued, Abra), and Norberto A. Aragoza (Dangdangla, San Juan, La Union) for Virginia Neutral; Noel A. Guillermo (Sta. Magdalena, Sarrat, Ilocos Norte), Eligio V. Vega (Nagsupotan, San Juan, Ilocos Sur), Florante B. Tingle (Pidpid, Sta. Cruz, Ilocos Sur), and Rolly B. Rodriguez (Sinapangan Norte, Balaoan, La Union) for Virginia Improved Flavor;

Burley: Henry T. De Vera (Tabtabungao, Rosario, La Union) and Lito S. Esteban (Matarannoc, San Manuel, Tarlac) for Burley Neutral; Jackylene M. Cacananta (Capulaan, Balungao, Pangasinan), Ernesto P. Francisco (Alabiao, Tuao, Cagayan), Roger M. Doroni (Dalig-Kalinga, Aurora, Isabela), and Richard C. De Guzman (Camburay, San Jose, Occidental Mindoro) for Burley Improved;

Native: Rosemarie A. Maddara (Imbia, Roxas, Isabela) for Native Cigar Filler; Joseph P. Lubos (Gatang, Malasiqui, Pangasinan) and Lloyd R. Gapasin (Parian Oeste, Bauang, La Union) for

Native Batek; and Felizardo R. Cutamora (Sarmingan, Narvacan, Ilocos Sur) for Native Snuff.

Administrator Robert L. Seares and Department of Agriculture Undersecretary Segfredo R. Serrano, along with Deputy Administrator for Operations Atty. Mel John I. Verzosa, NTA Director Rodolfo F. Salanga and ULPI President Winston P. Uy, handed out on stage the plaques and cash incentives to the provincial winners.

Speaking in behalf of the farmer awardees for Virginia tobacco, Bilgera thanked the agency for its various programs that look after the welfare and interest of the farmers not only in his province in Abra but also in other tobacco growing areas.

In his six years of planting tobacco, Bilgera, 32, already secured his family with a sustainable future. His rice and tobacco production are complementary as his sources of livelihood. He has never failed to repay the production assistance

Pls turn to next page



(L-R) **Ilocos Norte Branch** awardees: Edgardo P. Gabbac, Concepcion R. Quiocho, Marzel E. Manzanas, and Noel A. Guillermo; **Candon Branch**: Felizardo R. Cutamora, Hermielyn C. Ringor, Amelia Veronica L. Lacaden, and Florante B. Tingle; **Abra Branch**: Alvin B. Bilgera and Marife P. Peralta; **Occidental Mindoro Extension Office**: Xandra C. Bravo and Richard C. De Guzman.



La Union Branch awardees: Norberto A. Aragoza, Sinfrosa N. Valmonte, Christopher R. Supang, Henry T. De Vera, Lloyd R. Gapasin, Ambrocio R. Nisperos Jr., Rolly B. Rodriguez, and Candido I. Liangao; **Vigan Branch**: Vicky L. Ramos and Eligio V. Vega.



Isabela Branch awardees: Rosemarie A. Maddara, Roger M. Doroni, Primitivo A. Magudang, and Andres R. Gusto; **Cagayan Branch**: Ernesto Francisco (received by Norbert R. Domingo) and Moises D. Duran; **Pangasinan Branch**: Joseph P. Lubos, Marina G. Pine, Jackylene M. Cacananta, Rechie B. Vallo, Lito S. Esteban, and Marcos C. Atela.



Left photo: Corporate Planning Department Manager Rex Antonio P. Teoxon receives the Plaque of Appreciation from Administrative Department Manager Dr. Cristina C. Lopez and Deputy Administrator for Operations Atty. Mel John I. Verzosa; Right: (L-R) Excelsior R. Mejia, Gilbert I. Yadao, Loreto S. Reyes, Mario E. Corpuz, Minerva P. Mizal, Imelda N. Rifen, and Ped Ruben B. Barbero, who all have served for 39 years in the service, display their Certificate of Recognition.

Jayson I. Gannaban



NTA honors 20 retirees this year

NTA honored 20 retirees this year during the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the agency, held at the NTA Central Office quadrangle in Quezon City on July 28.

Leading the retirees was Rex Antonio P. Teoxon, Department Manager III of the Corporate Planning Department who will officially retire in September.

Mr. Teoxon, the sole Career Executive Service Officer (CESO) of NTA with Rank V, first joined the Philippine Virginia Tobacco Administration in 1981 then NTA after the merger of different tobacco agencies, in 1987. He was instrumental in the conceptualization and development of the Agency's major programs such as Tobacco Contract Growing Program, the Renewable Fuelwood Energy Farm, Enhancement of Capability on Quality Assurance, among many others.

Other retirees who personally received their Plaque of Appreciation were Primitivo A. Magudang, Agriculturist I, Isabela Branch; Vicente T. Saccuan, Senior Tobacco Production and Regulation Officer (Sr. TPRO), Isabela Branch; Antonia A. Lopez, Computer Operator II, Vigan Branch; Raquel Leilani F. Seña, Market Specialist V, Industrial Research Department (IRD); Andres R. Gusto, TPRO I,

Isabela Branch; and Manuel M. Beltran, Supervising TPRO, Isabela Branch.

Magudang, who retired in April 15, and Beltran, who is set to retire later this year, are both adjudged this year as one of the Outstanding Extension Workers for having their respective farmer cooperators win the coveted Tobacco Grower of the Year award.

Other retirees honored were Candelario P. Corpuz, Chief Agriculturist, Ilocos Norte Branch; Juanilla V. Raquel, Supervising Science Research Specialist, IRD; Leandro D. Bagoisan, Senior Science Research Specialist, IRD; Renato C. Aquino, Supervising TPRO, Candon Branch; Benson B. Cariño, Sr. TPRO, Candon Branch; Feliza D. Directo, Senior TPRO, Candon Branch; Greta S. Torres, Cashier II, Ilocos Norte Branch; Alfredo P. Villaceran, Agriculturist I, Pangasinan Branch; Mariano C. De la Cruz, Driver II, Cagayan Branch; Edna C. Zingapan, TPRO I, Cagayan Branch; Orlando D. Llantada, TPRO III, Isabela Branch; and Natividad B. Baquiran, TPRO I, Isabela Branch.

Branch and Department Managers received the awards in behalf of their respective staff who were not present during the awarding ceremony.

Dr. Cristina C. Lopez, Manager of the Administrative Department, commended the retirees for their dedication, unparalleled hardwork and loyalty to the agency, and the tobacco industry in general. Dr. Lopez and Deputy Administrator for Operations Atty. Mel John I. Verzosa handed the Plaques of Appreciation to the retirees.

NTA also honored more than a hundred employees who have made a meaningful contribution to the agency and its predecessor tobacco agencies for 30-plus years.

Heading the awardees were Mr. Robel U. Micu, Driver II, Administrative Department, who has served for 44 years; and Gregoria L. Domingo, Computer Operator II, Internal Audit Service; Vivian F. Ferarez, Supply Officer II, Administrative Department; and Ramon L. Fernandez, Market Specialist II, IRD, who all have served for 41 years.

from NTA for both crops.

The two lady TGY winners, Cacananta and Maddara, delivered their separate messages representing tobacco growers of Burley and Native, respectively.

Cacananta attributed her success in farming to the continuous assistance provided the farmers by the agency, through various projects and programs, such as irrigation support project, curing barn assistance projects, rice production, among others.

For TGY contest year 2015-2016, Cacananta, 33, planted Improved Burley in her one-hectare farm. She produced a total of 2,969 kg/ha with 92% high grades (ABC). She had a gross income of P208,944.40/ha.

Maddara, in her message, urged the government to have a balanced view of the tobacco industry in the country, that it remains to be committed in promoting

Pls turn to page 7

NTA marks 30th year... from page 3

fun-filled games, talent presentations, and had a relaxing time with free body massage service by the International Spiritual Material Therapeutic and Massage Training Center and manicure and pedicure services by Corazon C. Ortega Skills Training Center for Woman, Inc. Both training centers are accredited by TESDA.

The Vigan Branch had their fun-filled celebration at the Terraza de Niño Resort, in Bantay, Ilocos Sur. One of the highlights was a simple tribute program for retiree Antonia A. Lopez, Computer Operator II of Vigan Branch who has served for 40 years.

According to Branch Manager Minerva P. Mizal, the employees celebrated "pearls of wisdom" they gained through years of hardwork, patience, dedication, and commitment to their jobs.

The Ilocos Norte Branch and Isabela Branch employees had their separate celebrations at a beach in Brgy. Gabut Sur, Badoc, Ilocos Norte on August 11, and at Villa Mercedes, Brgy. Namnama, Ilagan City on August 2, respectively. (with reports from Candido I. Liangao, Divina D. Pagdilao, and Marife P. Peralta)



Dolores, Abra. Participants at the ceremonial planting site of this year's Synchronized Tree Planting headed by Administrator Robert L. Seares, FTSD Manager Imelda N. Riñen, Abra Branch Manager Esmeralda G. Valera, Mayor Robert Victor G. Seares Jr., and other local officials, and volunteers from participating agencies and local government offices, students, and farmers. N.E. Valdez

Synchronized tree planting marks 5th year in Dolores, Abra

THE Synchronized Tree Planting (STP) project of the National Tobacco Administration is now on its fifth year as a regular event of the celebrations of its Founding Anniversary. This year, the synchronized tree planting activities in various areas in Regions I, II, and Abra were conducted on July 31.

At least 2 million tree seedlings, mostly forest trees like mahogany, gmelina, ipil-ipil and neem trees, are expected to be planted this year.

The command center and ceremonial planting site was the campus of Dolores Central School, in Poblacion, Dolores, Abra with NTA Abra as host of the annual event for the first time.

Despite the intermittent rain brought about by Typhoon Gorio, a total of 340 participants attended the opening program on July 29 at the Dolores gym and in various planting sites in three barangays of Dolores, namely, Kimmelaba, Sallucag, and Libtec.

Administrator Robert L. Seares graced the event, which was participated in also by Robert Victor G. Seares Jr., mayor of host LGU Dolores, Abra, and other local officials; NTA Farm Technology and Services Department (FTSD) Manager Imelda N. Riñen; Director Perfecto B. Cardenas of the Civil Service Commission; Provincial Manager Vera Lew DG. De Vera of the National Food Authority; Conchita T. Zapata, Principal of Dolores Central School; Provincial Chief Administrative Officer Marlo C. Avero of the Department of Agrarian Reform; and Project Manager Willy Mendoza of the Universal Leaf Philippines, Incorporated.

According to Esmeralda G. Valera, manager of NTA Abra, the branch office is targeting to plant at least 200,000 seedlings this year in various planting sites in the province.

For the past four years, the agency was able to plant about

4.3 million trees. This had involved a total of about 94,000 participants from various sectors from 2013 to 2016.

NTA Abra also conducted tree planting after July 28.

Lagayan Mayor Jendricks S. Luna and Vice Mayor Joy Chrisma Luna led local officials and LGU employees in the tree planting activity with NTA at Barangay Collago, Lagayan on August 3.

Local officials and LGU employees of tobacco-growing municipalities of Manabo, Bucay, Peñarrubia, Pidigan, San Quintin, Tayum, San Juan, Lagangilang, Luba, San Isidro, Pilar and Villaviciosa also conducted tree planting activities in their respective areas in different schedules in August.

Students and teachers of Banat Elementary School and San Jose National High School, both in Manabo, and Pagala West Elementary School, Pagala East Primary School and Bangcagan Primary School, all in Bucay, also joined NTA Abra in said tree planting activities.

According to Manager Valera, this only shows the support of the different LGUs to NTA, not only in its renewable fuelwood projects but also in various programs and projects, that look after the interest and welfare of the local tobacco growers. *(Marife P. Peralta / Neyo E. Valdez)*

ILOCOS NORTE

THE NTA Ilocos Norte Branch, FTSD, and the Industrial Research Department in Batac City participated in this year's nationwide Synchronized Tree Planting (STP) activities on July 31 at Brgy. Uguis in Nueva Era, Ilocos Norte.

Amidst the cloudy skies in the early part of the day, the NTA family took their digging tools, personal effects as protection against the expected downpour, and food and drinking water and travelled for almost two hours from the office to the planting site. Local residents and barangay officials headed by Brgy. Chairman Arturo C. Lucas joined the NTA team in the planting activities.

Everyone accomplished the task early and had time to shoot/pose at all angles with the beautiful landscape as background, perfect in green and towering curves, with a river just a few meters along the road of the planting site.

According to Saturnino A. Agatep, TPRO III and Area



Administrator Seares gets help from volunteers at the planting site.

Coordinator, a total 5,000 seedlings of *Gmelina arborea*, *madre cacao*, and *Leocaena leucocephala* were planted in the area. "It was a very successful day, because the weather was fine, no downpour during our planting activities," said Agatep.

This year's STP was also implemented by various organizations, local government units and barangay officials, government agencies and religious groups in the different areas in the province. Based on the records of the Branch Operations Division, a total of 25,000 seedlings were produced, distributed, and/or transplanted in the province, with the proper coordination and assistance of the extension workers. There were 87 greening sites and a total of 11,371 participants

NTA Ilocos Norte, headed by Manager Mario E. Corpuz, encouraged the participating groups to take care of the transplants against weeds and drought and protect these from stray animals. (*Divina D. Pagdilao*)

CANDON BRANCH

GREEN volunteers from the Municipality of Tagudin, Ilocos Sur planted forest tree seedlings at the municipal demo farm, evacuation center, and sanitary landfill at Brgy. Cabulanglangan on August 18. This was in support to the NTA Synchronized Tree Planting (STP) spearheaded by the Candon Branch.

Deputy Administrator for Operations Atty. Mel John I. Verzosa and Candon Branch Manager Estrella G. De Peralta

joined the planting volunteers of Tagudin headed by the local officials, namely, Mayor Roque S. Verzosa, Vice Mayor Bernardo Tovera Jr., Municipal Agricultural Officer Jocelyn L. Lamadrid, municipal officers Aiza Marie L. Lanuza (Environment and Natural Resources), Mark Louie S. Fajardo (Tourism), and Juliet Meryl C. Jimenea (Focal Person for Tobacco), with some volunteers from national agencies, local police and firemen, other civic groups, and tobacco farmers associations and cooperatives.

For this year's STP, the Branch Office had a total of 19,288 seedlings, mostly mahogany, *Gmelina*, *kalantas*, *ipil-ipil* and neem tree, planted by 1,935 volunteers. Mayor Verzosa, in his message, focused on the citizens' contribution in arresting the bad effects of global warming. He said that tree planting is but one of the many activities one can share to help mitigate the ill effects of this worldwide phenomenon which mankind is the main contributory factor.

Tagudin is one of the 22 municipalities of the 2nd district of Ilocos Sur, under the coverage of Candon Branch Office, that participated in this year's STP. A total of 360,061 seedlings were planted by about 36,100 planting volunteers.

Tree seedlings were propagated in nurseries strategically located in selected areas across the district, from Nagbukel and Narvacan to Tagudin and Sta. Cruz and in the upland municipalities of Lidlidda, Salcedo, Gregorio del Pilar, and Quirino. (*Orlando O. Galdones*)



Nueva Era, Ilocos Norte



Tagudin, Ilocos Sur

TGY provincial winners recognized, from page 5

a healthful environment, and at the same time, ensures that the interests of the tobacco farmers will not be disadvantaged. "*Sana po, ay maging tuloy-tuloy ang pagpapatupad ng mga proyekto na nakakatulong sa aming mga magsasaka,*" she said.

During the contest year, Maddara was able to produce 3,253 kg/ha with 59.90% medium to high grades, and gross income of P156,844/ha. In 2010, she was recognized by Isabela Leaf Tobacco Co., Inc. as one of their outstanding farmers.

The provincial winners are all qualified to compete for the National TGY Contest which will be announced next year.

The TGY Awards also recognized extension workers who assisted the provincial awardees. They are

Concepcion R. Quiocho (TPRO I) and Marzel E. Manzanos (Agriculturist I), Ilocos Norte Branch; Marife P. Peralta (TPRO), Abra Branch; Vicky L. Ramos (TPRO I), Vigan Branch; Amelia Veronica L. Lacaden (Agriculturist II) and Hermielyn C. Ringor (TPRO I), Candon Branch; Sinfrosa N. Valmonte (TPRO I), Candido I. Liangao (Agriculturist I), Christopher R. Supang (TPRO III), and Ambrosio C. Nisperos Jr. (TPRO I), La Union Branch; Rechie B. Vallo (TPRO I), Marina G. Pine (Agriculturist I), and Marcos B. Atela (Agriculturist I), Pangasinan Branch; Moises F. Duran (TPRO I), Cagayan Branch; Andres R. Gusto (TPRO I) and Primitivo A. Magudang (Agriculturist I), Isabela Branch; and Xandra C. Bravo (TPRO I), Occidental Mindoro Field

Office.

In the TGY Contest, the provincial branch offices serve as the implementing arm of the project through its Branch Technical Committee (BTC). The committee is responsible for the recruitment, recommendation, and monitoring of the contestants' activities. The FTSD, acting as the National Technical Committee, reviews and evaluates the contestants' credentials and records forwarded by the BTC, and recommends the winners based on contest rules and guidelines to the TGY National Advisory Council, chaired by the Administrator.

Through the search and awards, the agency hopes to reward practices that allow the interplay of technology, quality, yield, and increased farmers' income.

Ilocos Norte Branch Manager Mario E. Corpuz and FTSD Manager Imelda N. Riñen hosted the event.

Candon hosts pre-tripartite conference

CONSULTATION for the adjustment of tobacco floor prices officially started with the pre-tripartite consultative conference with tobacco farmer leaders from different tobacco-growing provinces, held in Candon City last August 17.

The one-day meeting, facilitated by the NTA, is in preparation for the Tripartite Consultative Conference to be held on September 5 and 6 at the NTA Central Office in Quezon City.

Administrator Robert L. Seares, along with Deputy Administrator for Operations Atty. Mel John I. Verzosa, Candon City Mayor Ericson G. Singson, NTA Directors Nestor C. Casela, Teofilo R. Quintal, and Wilfredo C. Martinez, graced the opening program.

The biennial tripartite conference serves as a venue for the review and adjustment of floor prices of the different tobacco types (Virginia, Burley and Native) and sub-types (neutral/filler and topped).

Before this, the Provincial Branch Offices conducted pre-tripartite consultative meetings with representatives of tobacco farmers in their respective areas in August. In the branch level pre-tripartite activity, facilitated by the Branch Officials, farmer leaders representing different tobacco types deliberated on and analyzed sets of cost of production for each tobacco type.

“Upon consultation with our members at a pre-tripartite meeting at the branch level, we are ready to discuss and agree at a consolidated unified cost of production per tobacco type, which we will bring to the negotiating table at the Central Office,” said Mario E. Cabasal, president of the National Federation of Tobacco Farmers Associations and Cooperatives (NAFTAC).

Mayor Singson expressed support for the farmers’ demand to increase the floor prices of tobacco, amidst the yearly increase of production cost.

Administrator Seares said that the tripartite conference serves as a venue for the tobacco farmers and the tobacco firms (cigarette manufacturers, tobacco dealers, and exporters) to evaluate and negotiate the floor prices of unprocessed tobacco leaves. “It allows the farmers an opportunity to protect their interests and guarantee a profit for their tobacco leaves,” he added.

Atty. Verzosa said that the agency is biased for the tobacco farmers, being the backbone of the industry. He reiterated the Farmers First policy of the agency when he urged the industry stakeholders to listen to the demands of the farmers, particularly on proper grading and better prices for their produce.

Regulation Manager Maybelen B. Dictaan discussed the overview and mechanics of the consultative conference.

She explained that the conference will help the farmers prepare for their



(Top photo) Manager Dictaan answers a query from a tobacco farmer. (Lower photo) Administrator Seares speaks with the participants before the discussion on floor prices.

effective engagement with the private sector in September. The Branch Officials acted as facilitators among the farmer groups during the deliberation on production cost for each tobacco type.

Presenters during the discussion in Candon were farmer leaders Bernard R. Vicente for Virginia Topped; Nedie Lanuza for Virginia Neutral; Faustino U. Agudong for Burley Topped; Gerardo Ablao for Burley Neutral; Reymund Piñon for Native Cigar Filler; Franklin B. Dumpit for Native Batek; and Cabasal for Native Snuff.

After day-long deliberations, the farmers came up with consolidated costs of production which they will present at the negotiating table in the tripartite conference proper next month.

Especially considered in the deliberation were cost of materials, such as fertilizers and pesticides, and labor (seedbed preparation, seedling care and field activities) and other expenditures (sticks, materials for repair, depreciation cost, interests, and land rental).

Dictaan said that the tobacco buying firms will review this cost of production presented by the farmers, the same way that the farmers will also review those that come from the private firms, she added. She clarified, however, that cost of production is only one of the factors and conditions to be considered in setting the floor prices.

She added that NTA will reconcile the parameters to be considered in costing based on actual application, such as prevailing world market conditions, reasonable margin of profit for farmers, dealers, and exporters, the quality of tobacco, and other relevant factors and conditions.

The new adjustment of floor prices for this year’s tripartite conference will be implemented during the tobacco trading years 2018 and 2019.

The current floor prices for the highest grade of each tobacco type are P81 for Virginia, P68 for Burley, and P70 for Native type.

Based on data from the Regulation Department, floor prices (per kilogram) for high to medium grades of tobacco in the past two tripartite conferences (2013 and 2015), chaired by then Administrator Edgardo D. Zaragoza, had an average increase of P4.48 for Virginia, P4.80 for Burley, and P3.88 for Native type.

As mandated by Presidential Decree (PD) No. 627 s. 1974, PD No. 1481 s. 1974 (for Virginia), and PD No. 1143 s. 1977 as amended (for Burley), NTA is authorized to set/fix tobacco floor prices by adopting a tripartite consultative conference, through its Regulation Office as the lead department.

The floor price provides the tobacco farmers a guaranteed income of at least 25% from investment on tobacco production. 🌱

Curing barn aid for tobacco growers released

SOME 884 tobacco growers in Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, and La Union received curing barn assistance from the National Tobacco Administration. The ceremonial release, spearheaded by the provincial branch offices, was held in different venues in separate schedules in August.

The ceremonial release, held at the Ilocos Sur Provincial Capitol in Vigan City on August 8, was graced by Ilocos Sur Gov. Ryan Luis V. Singson, members of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan, NTA Administrator Robert L. Seares, NTA Director Teofilo R. Quintal, and farmer leader Mario C. Cabasal.

The farmers either received P20,000 each for repair/improvement of flue-curing barn for Virginia (or air-curing shed for Burley/native) or P50,000 each for construction of new barns/sheds. Of the recipients, 27 (for the first batch) came from the municipalities of the second district, including Candon City, while 333 came from the first district.

Only one of the recipients in Candon Branch is for construction, the rest are for repair or improvement. According to Candon Branch Manager Estrella G. De Peralta they expect to distribute assistance for the second batch to additional 138 farmer beneficiaries of the total target of 350 beneficiaries.

NTA implemented the Curing Barn Assistance Program (CBAP) for Fiscal Year 2016-2017 to promote the use of the NTA-prescribed efficient flue-curing barns and air-curing sheds; and help the farmers increase their income through the production of properly cured leaf with these prescribed barns/sheds.

In his message, Administrator Seares said that the CBAP is just one of the programs designed by the agency to promote the welfare of the tobacco growers, as he exhorted local leaders to be partners of the agency in helping improve the lives of the farmers and their communities.

Governor Singson commended the agency for the call of cooperation and partnership, as he emphasized proper coordination of the provincial government and the agency through its branch offices in Candon and Vigan as



Ilocos Norte Gov. Imee R. Marcos shares light moments with Administrator Robert L. Seares before the ceremonial release of curing barn assistance to the tobacco growers held in Laoag City. Also in photo are NTA Director Nestor C. Casela (left) and NTA AgriPinoy Consultant Dr. Mikael Benedict G. Crisologo.
Maylene B. Afos

a major factor in facilitating delivery of services to the public, and in ensuring growth and progress in the province.

The governor and the Sangguniang Panlalawigan headed by Vice Governor Jeremias C. Singson, in their separate messages, were one in their gratitude to the tobacco growers, calling them “*bannuar*” (heroes), for having contributed a big part in the progress of the province through the share of the local government units from the excise tax collection of tobacco under Republic Act 7171.

In Ilocos Norte, Gov. Imee R. Marcos joined NTA officials headed by Administrator Seares and Director Nestor C. Casela, in personally distributing checks worth P3.7 million to 187 tobacco farmers who compose the first batch of beneficiaries.

The ceremonial release was held at the Ilocos Norte Provincial Capitol on August 15.

According to Ilocos Norte Branch Manager Mario E. Corpuz, all the farmer beneficiaries received the reimbursement in flue-curing barn repair specifically in furnace conversion from conventional design to the Anawang or Venturi type.

Director Casela pointed out the yearly decline of tobacco production in the

province and reminded the farmers to double their efforts in producing and growing high-quality tobacco due to consistently high demand.

In La Union, 337 tobacco growers in the province received P11.36-million curing barn assistance from the NTA. The ceremonial release, attended by 80 beneficiaries, was held at the Tobacco Farmers’ Multipurpose Training Center in Bauang, La Union on August 31. This was graced by Administrator Seares, Bauang Municipal Councilor Romeo Alexander Obong, and Municipal Agriculturist Rebecca Sabado.

According to La Union Branch Manager Dr. Giovanni B. Palabay, the second batch, with 108 farmer cooperators, will receive CBAP assistance in September.

Before the release of the CBAP assistance, some farmer cooperators who were affected by typhoon “Lawin” in October 2016, received calamity aid under the P3.5-million financial assistance from the NTA in April this year.

Each of the of the 924 affected farmers from Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, and La Union, received P2,000 for barn repair to help them recover from the damages caused by the typhoon.

Administrator Seares will also grace the ceremonial release of curing barn assistance to tobacco growers in Pangasinan on September 14, Isabela on September 21, Cagayan on September 22, and Abra on September 25. 🌱



Tobacco farmer Maximo Tara of Maratudo, Magsingal, Ilocos Sur (5th from left) receives the cash assistance from (L-R) SP Members Efen Rafanan, Ronnie Rapanut, Constante Oandasan, Governor Singson, Administrator Seares, Vice Gov. Jeremias C. Singson, and NTA Director Quintal.

Newsletter writers learn Ilokano orthography

CLES B. Rambaud, a multi-awarded Ilokano writer and the Managing Editor of the *Bannawag Magazine*, lectured on Ilokano Orthography to the staff writers of the *Philippine Tobacco News*, the official bi-monthly publication of NTA, during its Annual Staff Meeting and Training Seminar at the NTA Central Office in Quezon City on August 25.

Rambaud gave emphasis on the correct spelling based on the Ilokano Orthography (2012 edition) adopted by the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino, and correct usage of words and grammar in Ilokano, especially in formal writing.

The lecture is in preparation for the plan of the agency to publish an Ilokano version of its current official bi-monthly magazine. According to Neyo E. Valdez, Public Relations Officer III and Managing Editor of the *Philippine Tobacco News*, the Ilokano edition is especially designed for the tobacco farmers, using the local language and more spaces allotted for technology-based articles and information relevant to their communities.

Said Ilokano newsletter is in response to the instruction last July of Deputy Administrator for Operations Atty. Mel John I. Verzosa to the Public Relations Office to come out with a publication that caters exclusively to the tobacco growers which a vast majority come from the Ilokano-speaking provinces in Regions 1 and 2.

The agency has been using Ilokano in many of its publications. Last year, the agency published the Ilokano versions of the Tobacco Production Manuals (both for Virginia and Burley) for the tobacco farmers. Ilokano is also used in its annual Techno-guide Calendar.

Members of the staff for the Ilokano edition were selected from the participants who are all designated information officers of their respective branch offices. They are Engr. Divina D. Pagdilao, Agriculturist I, Ilocos Norte; Engr. Noralyn I. Idica, TPRO III, Ilocos Sur - Vigan; Charlemagne P. Navarro, TPRO I, Ilocos Sur - Candon; Marife P. Peralta, TPRO I, Abra; Joannaliza D. Ordinante, TPRO I, La Union; Marlon G. Facun, TPRO I, Pangasinan; Engr. Elmerante A. Ginez, Agriculturist I,



Rambaud

Cagayan; Lagrimas B. Beltran, TPRO I, Isabela; and Felisa R. Aurellano, Community Devt Officer III, FTSD.

The discussion on Orthography was preceded by a lecture on Photography by Leilanie G. Adriano, Bureau Chief of the Philippine News Agency in Ilocos Norte. The lecture was aimed at training the staff not only on photojournalism (for the newsletter) but also in shooting activities of their field work and branch events for proper documentation.

Administrative Department Manager Dr. Cristina C. Lopez welcomed the participants, giving emphasis on the importance of the role of the staff writers in information dissemination and image building of the agency.

The event, graced by Administrator Robert L. Seares, was concluded with a lecture on Editorial Standards by Dr. Perlita L. Baula, Editor-in-Chief of the *Philippine Tobacco News*, and a meeting with the staff writers. Present during the meeting were Corporate Planning Department Manager Rex Antonio P. Teoxon and Industrial Research Department Manager Dr. Roberto R. Bonoan. 🌱

THE local government of Alubijid, Misamis Oriental, through its Excise Tax Board Committee, has been distributing galvanized iron (GI) sheets to qualified Batek tobacco growers for their curing sheds since July this year. As of August, it has distributed 11,958 sheets to 256 farmer beneficiaries from the different tobacco-growing barangays in the municipality.

According to Mayor Alvin Giovanni A. Labis, the amount used for the purchase of the GI sheets (including nails) is part of the town's share from the excise tax collection for locally manufactured Burley/Native tobacco pursuant to Republic Act 8240.

A maximum number of 64 GI sheets per one hectare planted to tobacco are given free to the farmers. For half a hectare, 32 sheets are given, pro-rated according to area planted.

The Excise Tax Board Committee, chaired by Mayor Labis, is composed of the chairpersons of the five farmers cooperatives (Lagtang, Calatcat, Talaba

GI sheets for Misamis Or. batek farmers

Text and photo by Ma. Mercedes M. Ayco



Turnover of G.I. sheets by Mayor Labis to tobacco farmers of Brgy. Sampatulog, Alubijid.

I, Talaba II, and Centro Sampatulog); the Barangay Chairmen of the four top producers of Batek, the Committee on Agriculture of the Sangguniang Bayan, representatives from the Office of Agricultural Services, the Municipal Planning Officer, the Treasurer, the Budget Officer, Vice Mayor Emmanuel M. Jamis, and the staff from the NTA.

The first batch of recipients were 38 members in good standing of the

Calatcat Farmers MPC, who received 2,154 GI sheets on July 17. A total of 9,804 GI sheets were released to 218 farmers on August 14. According to Mayor Labis, more GI sheets will be released in September.

The farmers are hoping that in the succeeding releases of the LGU's share of the excise tax, they will receive another assistance for their tobacco farming venture. 🌱



BOWLING FRIENDSHIP GAMES 2017

SELECTED teams from the Central Office won over their counterparts from the Provincial Branch Offices during the Friendly Bowling Games on July 27. The Games, participated in by 48 employees divided into 12 teams, were organized by the NTA Employees Association in conjunction with NTA's 30th Anniversary celebration.

Alejandro S. Cristobal, Science Research Specialist I of the Industrial Research Department (IRD), garnered the highest triple of Men's Individual Category, followed by Edgardo C. Guia of the Administrative Department and Ramon L. Fernandez of IRD, second and third placers, respectively.

For the Women's Individual Category, Teresita D. Dela Rosa of the Corporate Planning Department copped first place. Dinah E. Pichay, Manager of the Internal Audit Service, and Imelda B. Urubio of the Regulation Department were second and third placers, respectively.

Top finishers from the Branch Offices were La Union

Branch Manager Dr. Giovanni B. Palabay, Joefrey T. Bautista of Cagayan Branch, and Myrna D. Salut of Ilocos Norte Branch.

According to NTAEA President Raquel Leilani F. Seña, the association hosted the Friendship Games to enhance unity and camaraderie among the employees as the NTA celebrates its milestone celebration.

The awarding of winners was held during the Fellowship Night of the NTA employees on July 28.

Also awarded during the night were the winners of the 2017 NTA Administrator's Cup which was held from May to July this year.

They were the Yellow Team composed of Guia (Team Captain), Dela Rosa, Joseph Albaos, and Kyra Clamaña. The Fuchsia Team of Excelsior R. Mejia, and the Orange Team of Joseph B. Benosa won second and third places, respectively.

Top finishers for the Individual Awards were Benosa,

Pls turn to page 12

NTA promotes 9, appoints 1 staff

NTA promoted nine of its staff and issued one appointment, per separate notices posted by the Administrative Department in July and August. The promotions and appointment were approved by the Civil Service Commission (CSC).

Imelda N. Riñen was promoted from Chief Science Research Specialist of the Production Support Services, a division of the Farm Technology and Services Department (FTSD) in Batac City, to Department Manager III of FTSD. Riñen, who holds a master's degree in Plant Pathology from the University of the Philippines in Los Baños, Laguna, has been the officer-in-charge of FTSD since the retirement of former FTSD manager Luzveminda R. Truong in July 2015.

Also promoted was Nelly U. Castro, from Supervising Science Research Specialist of the Product Development Division of Industrial Research Department (IRD) to Chief Science Research Specialist of the Farm Technology Development Division of FTSD, and Ped Ruben B. Barbero from Supervising Tobacco Production and Regulation Officer to Chief Agriculturist of Abra Branch.

Castro has a master's degree in Agronomy, major in Crop Physiology from UP Los Baños. Barbero has been the acting Chief Agriculturist and officer-in-charge of Branch Operations since 2002.

Dina B. Dela Reyna, a licensed chemist, was promoted from Chemist III of the Quality Assurance Division to Chemist IV of the Techno Laboratory Services and Instrumentation Division of the IRD. She is a graduate of BS Chemistry from the University of the Philippines in Los Baños, Laguna.

The agency has new Administrative Officers (AO) V, with the promotion of Felicismo T. Lazo, from Cashier II of Abra Branch; and Aurie Nellie A. Tumbaga, from Tobacco Production and Regulation Officer III of La Union Branch. According to the Administrative Department, as corrected by CSC, all AO III should now be AO V.



Riñen



Barbero



Castro

The following staff also got their promotions: Alejandro S. Cristobal from Science Research Specialist I of the Quality Assurance Division of the IRD to Science Research Specialist II of FTSD; Rogelio C. Santiago, from Financial Analyst II of the Accounting Division to Supervising Cashier of the Budget and Cash Management Division, Finance Department; and Rosie Melba C. Pajarillo, from Secretary I of La Union Branch to Budget Officer II, Finance Department.

The newly promoted staff took their oath of office before Administrator Robert L. Seares on August 29 at the NTA Central Office in Quezon City, except for Riñen, Castro, and Cristobal, who are expected to take their oath on the first week of September.

Meanwhile, Orlando E. Pacapac III, newly appointed Accountant IV of the NTA Finance Department, also took his oath of office before Administrator Seares on August 2 at the NTA Central Office. Pacapac replaced Arthur Barbero who retired from government service last year.

Before his regular appointment, Pacapac, a Certified Public Accountant, served as Accountant II/Assistant Head of the Accounts Analysis and Liquidation Division of the Accounting Center of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

The promotions of staff and regular appointments are in line with the approval on February 28, 2017 by the NTA Governing Board of the filling-up of 60 vacant plantilla positions of the agency and the implementation of the Merit Promotion Plan (MPP), contained in NTA Office Circular No. 2014-01 dated October 20, 2014. 🌱

E-payroll system for NTA La Union

NTA La Union Branch Manager Dr. Giovanni B. Palabay and Branch Cashier Nicolas A. Mendoza signed a memorandum of agreement with Ferdinand I. Palaganas, acting Head of Landbank of the Philippines, South La Union Branch, designating the bank as the exclusive partner in disbursing salaries to La Union Branch employees, through ATM cards for electronic money withdrawal.

The MOA signing, witnessed by Chief Agriculturist Emma Beth B. Fantastico, was held at the La Union Tobacco Farmers' Multi-purpose Training Center in Payocpoc Norte Oeste, Bauang, La Union on August 29. The electronic payroll system for the Branch Office is expected to be implemented in December this year.

According to Mendoza, the change of payroll system was in compliance with the Department of Budget and Management and Commission on Audit instruction that all government agencies should follow the electronic payroll system to ensure greater efficiency, transparency, and accountability on government personnel compensation funds.

During the pre-MOA signing orientation and the open forum, the employees raised their apprehensions and security concerns, especially on matters of ATM cloning and illegal savings account transfer by hackers. Palaganas assured that the bank has been providing security measures to ensure that their clients' accounts will not be hacked and that their ATM cards are provided with microchips that are impossible to clone. 🌿 (Kristin Mae S. Castañeda)

Disposal of valueless records at Central Office

NTA conducted its first formal disposal of valueless records through sale at the Central Office in Quezon City, August 18.

The disposal, authorized by the National Archives of the Philippines (NAP) through the issuance of Authority to Dispose of Records with control No. A-2017-678 and dated July 11, 2017, was spearheaded by the NTA Records and Documents Control Team (RDCT) headed by Perla C. Manzon, Administrative Services Department chief and designated Records Coordinator, and Leah Gina B. Ramboyong, Records Officer II, assistant Records Coordinator.

A total of 12.8576 cubic meters of valueless records which weighed 4,592 kilos were collected and disposed. The items for disposal included records that outlived their respective prescribed retention periods, and extra copies (non-record materials) with the original copies kept by the concerned department or unit.

The records were certified by Dr. Cristina C. Lopez, Administrative Department Manager, as no longer needed and not involved or connected in any administrative or judicial cases, and their disposal followed the applicable rules and regulations of the NAP guidelines on valueless records in government



Sampling of imported unmanufactured tobacco for chemical analysis

THE NTA Industrial Research Department headed by Dr. Robert R. Bonoan (rightmost), and technical staff, Lina A. Cera (2nd from left), Chief of the Quality Assurance Division, and Carol Lynn R. Sambo, Science Research Specialist II, gathered tobacco leaf samples, Virginia and Burley, at La Suerte Cigar and Cigarette Factory in Parañaque City on August 4.

This is in connection with the implementation of the "Annual Physical and Chemical Evaluation of Locally Grown and Imported Tobacco Leaf" Project of the agency.

NTA IRD is conducting monitoring and evaluation of the physical and chemical quality of imported tobacco leaves from major source countries for Crop Year 2016-2017.

According to Cera, the leaves gathered will be used to compare with our locally grown tobacco for possible import substitution.

"The ultimate aim is to improve the quality of our locally grown tobacco leaves, to be at par with the quality standards of the world market, and this redounds to the benefit of our local tobacco growers who expect better income with the quality of their produce," she said.

Aside from setting quality standards of tobacco leaf and products, the NTA IRD is also responsible in developing other industrial uses of tobacco, conducting market research, and rendering laboratory analytical services.

The NTA IRD Team also gathered tobacco leaf samples from an PMFTC, Inc. plant in Tanauan City, Batangas on August 11. 🌿 (Photo: Carol Lynn R. Sambo)

agencies.

The actual disposal activity was witnessed by the representatives from NAP, Joseph C. Tomaroy, and the Commission on Audit, Roy Antonio Teneza, and records custodians from the different departments in the central office.

The disposal of the valueless records was made through D' Lacoste Enterprise, NAP's official buyer. (Neyo E. Valdez) 🌿

NTA Vigan holds info drive on tobacco production

BEFORE farmers could start farm activities for the coming tobacco cropping season, the operations division of NTA Vigan, headed by Branch Manager Minerva P. Mizal, started conducting information drive in all tobacco-growing municipalities in the first district of Ilocos Sur, which the branch covers. This is in coordination with the local government units in the district.

Among the areas first visited were six of the 26 tobacco-growing barangays of Cabugao, Ilocos Sur in separate schedules from August 23 to August 30. About 300 farmers participated in the information drive, particularly on planting Virginia New Improved Flavor type, in barangays Aragan, Sisim, Caellayan, Cuantacla, Cuancabal, and Quezon.

Among tobacco growing municipalities or cities, Cabugao received the second highest share from the 2013 collection of excise taxes on locally manufactured Virginia-type cigarettes at P331.288 million, based on Local Budget Memorandum 72 issued in 2016 by the Department of Budget and Management. During crop year 2016-2017, the first-class municipality had a total of 1,238 farmer cooperators representing 812.5 hectares of tobacco farms.

Also included in the discussion during the meetings, presided in some areas by Chief Agriculturist Faustino O. Taal and other extension workers assigned in Cabugao, were the two institutional projects of the agency under the Integrated Farming and Other Income Generating Activities Project (IFOIGAP), namely, the total Tobacco Contract Growing System (TCGS) and the Rice Project Wet Season, with focus on the updates in the package of technologies for both tobacco and rice crops. 🌿 (Tomasito G. Taloza)

BOWLING FRIENDSHIP GAMES 2017... from page 11

champion; Mejia, second place; and Guia, third place for Men's Category; and Perlita L. Baula (Kiwi Green) of the Office of the Administrator, champion; Dela Rosa, second place; and Urubio (Gray), third place.

Other winners of individual awards were Guia, highest single; Mejia, highest triple and highest pinning, for Men's Category; and Armie Cereno of the Finance Department, highest single; De la Rosa, highest triple; and Baula, highest pinning for Women's Category. 🌿