

FEDERATION OF FREE FARMERS



Souvenir Program

Pagsulong Para sa Malayang Pagsasaka, Malagong Ekonomiya
at Maginhawang Buhay sa Bawat Pilipino

OCTOBER 25, 2023 | 7AM - 6:30PM

Salvador H. Escudero III (SHE) Hall
National Meat Inspection Service Building
#4 Visayas Avenue, Vasra, Quezon City



The cross and crown atop the FFF emblem signify its founding on the Feast of Christ the King and its ultimate objective for the Kingdom of God - love, justice and truth - to reign on this earth. The three mountains represent the three main regions (Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao) and the FFF's desire to unite the entire nation. To accomplish this task, it must organize the most numerous and important citizens of the country who are symbolized by the plow and the carabao -- the farmers. Around these symbols are the initials of the Federation and the laurel leaf to signify success.

MANIFESTO of the FEDERATION OF FREE FARMERS

Beloved Tiller of the Soil:

You are the most important worker in the world. You produce the food and the force that cause the buildings in the towns and cities to rise, the wheels of industry to turn, the carriers of trade to run, the hand of government to sway; and the pen of learning to move - nay, that cause life itself to go on in this world.

Specially you, farmer of the Philippines: You are the most important person in the country. Because of the absolutely essential nature of your task as well as by virtue of your great number, you are the backbone of the nation.

If you are sick, the nation cannot be healthy; if you are ignorant, the nation cannot be informed; if you are destitute, the nation cannot find contentment; if you are a slave, the nation cannot be free; if you grieve, the nation cannot be happy.

Many people, however, do not see this important truth, or seeing it, nevertheless refuse to act upon it. This, your primary importance, is often belittled and your rights disregarded - to the great misery of the nation. For the sake of the nation, therefore, as well as for your own sake, your importance must be recognized and your rights respected. You must be made healthy and informed and contented and free and happy, so that the nation will also be healthy and informed and contented and free and happy.

Acting alone, you cannot bring this about, for you are weak. But if you unite with all the other tillers of the land you will bring it about in no time, for then you will have not only truth and justice on your side but also the irresistible strength of numbers.

You must therefore unite under a common purpose, and act with system and coordination so that you will be able to accomplish your common end in the best possible manner.

This is your paramount end - to attain eternal happiness with God in Heaven. But for you to attain this, you must live as God wants you to live on this earth. On this earth God wants you to have enough food to eat, decent clothes to wear and a roof over your head. God wants you to raise and educate your sons and daughters in health and reasonable comfort. God wants you to live well, and living well, serve Him well.

But you do not live well. No matter how hard you work, you do not have enough food to eat. You do not have decent clothes to wear. You do not have a decent house to live in. Your children are sick. Your children are unschooled.

This is the motive that impels us - that we may, insofar as God has placed it in our power to do, help put things in the order God

wants them to be, and thus merit His love and mercy.

Tiller of the soil, since it is your task to produce food for men to eat, you are entitled to all that is necessary to enable you to produce sufficient food for all.

Tiller of the soil, you are a human being created in the image and likeness of God. Hence, you are entitled to all that is necessary for a life in keeping with your dignity as a human being.

In order to produce enough food and live with dignity, you must own sufficient land and adequate tools with which to work the land. This is your basic need and we shall direct all our efforts to the satisfaction of this need as our ultimate objective. The accomplishment of this objective would involve, among other things, the settlement of idle lands of which we have so much in our country, the adoption of modern tools and modern means of production, such as mechanization, fertilizer, irrigation, seed selection, pest control, and the establishment of home industries. But all these will necessarily take time. Hence, you must have patience and faith in God who always crowns an honest man's effort with the wonders of His bounty.

Meanwhile, besides the fact that you may not own the land which you cultivate and that the crop that you produce in your field would not be enough if it all went to you, your difficult life is made much more difficult by the greed oppression of some other people who take advantage of your poverty and weakness. We shall uphold and defend your rights against oppression and injustice.

In pursuing our legitimate ends we may be met with opposition and even hatred. We shall never lack courage and constancy. But it is good for us to remember that there are many people who truly love us; and it will profit us more to think of the kindness of those who love us; than to brood over the oppression of those who hate us.

So we shall not look upon anyone as our enemy, but we shall regard as our brothers redeemed by the blood of a common Saviour, confronted with common problems and faced with the common task of making this earth a prosperous and happy place to live in. We shall, therefore, promote cooperation rather than conflict, harmony rather than discord, love rather than hate.

Farmers of the Philippines, unite! United, you can lift your eyes with hope - for the future is in your hands.

Manila, Philippines, October 25, 1953
Feast of Christ the King



FFF 70th

ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION PROGRAM

OCTOBER

25
2023

7:00AM - 6:30PM

Salvador H. Escudero III
(SHE) Hall National Meat
Inspection Service Building
#4 Visayas Avenue, Vasra,
Quezon City

7:00am - 8:00am

PRE-EVENT

- A. Mass
- B. Voice Over Reminders and Orientation

9:00am - 10:00am

OPENING PROGRAM

- A. National Anthem
- B. Welcome Remarks
- C. Documentary Video
- D. Introduction of the Guest Speaker
- E. Keynote Speech – President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr.

10:30am - 12:00noon

PANEL DISCUSSION ON THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND IMPACT OF THE FFF

- Panelists – Charlie Avila, Gerry Bulatao, Edicio de la Torre, Glicerio Tan
- Trivia Questions
- Messages/Reactions

12:00noon - 1:00pm

LUNCH BREAK

- Raffle/Trivia Questions
- Messages

1:00pm - 2:30pm

SECOND PANEL DISCUSSION ON THE CURRENT SITUATION OF THE FFF

- Panelists:
Iya Lababit Abrazado (Camiling), Mary Ann Odiaman (Sultan Kudarat),
Susan Llamido (Davao City), Saturnino Distor (Pangasinan)
- Trivia Questions
- Messages/Reactions

2:30pm - 3:30pm

THIRD PANEL DISCUSSION ON THE ROAD TO 100 YEARS

- Panelists:
Leonardo Montemayor, Dioscoro Granada, Franco Garlit

3:30pm - 4:00pm

- In Memoriam
- Closing message

POST-EVENT

- Photo ops
- Exhibit
- Socials/Cocktails

Emcees: Jena Zabala and Franco Garlit

The Past, Present, and Future; The Federation of Free Farmers: A Celebration

The Federation of Free Farmers (FFF) has gone a long way since its founding in 1953 as a peaceful alternative to the Huk peasant rebellion. As an organization *of* farmers, *by* farmers and *for* farmers, it has been at the forefront of the struggle to liberate the Filipino farmer from social, political, economic, moral and cultural oppression and backwardness.

This rich and storied journey of the FFF over the past 70 years has borne many fruits, such as the institutionalization of the agrarian reform program and the establishment and strengthening of the program's support agencies, particularly the Department of Agrarian Reform and the Land Bank of the Philippines. It has branched out to many other initiatives in the areas of agricultural cooperatives, rural women and youth, legislative and public advocacy, participation in the party list system for Congress, and many others. At present, the FFF enjoys a mass base of about 200,000 farmers and fisherfolk, and remains as one of the largest and most reputable organizations of farmers in the country.

On the 25th of October 2023, the FFF will commemorate this long and fruitful journey of 70 years. About 500 members of the FFF from all over the country, their sympathizers and friends will gather together at the Salvador H. Escudero Hall at the National Meat Inspection Service (NMIS) building along Visayas Avenue, Quezon City to reminisce the past and celebrate the Federation's platinum anniversary. This grand reunion, the culmination of "mini-celebrations" in the provincial chapters, is anchored on the theme ***"Pagsulong para sa Malayang Magsasaka, Malagong Ekonomiya at Maginhawang Buhay sa Bawat Pilipino"***.

In this celebration, the Federation will value its past struggles and initiatives. Take pride in its present path. And in the end, honor its

commitment to the Filipino farmers and the country as a whole by building new roads to the future.

The day-long celebration begins with the opening of a photo exhibit that highlights seven decades of the FFF's growth and accomplishments. This exhibit chronicles the beginning of FFF's journey in the 1950's, its significant role in the struggle for agrarian reforms in the 1960's, the political crossroads the Federation encountered in the 1970's, the empowerment of its farmer-members through the organization and expansion of its cooperatives in the 1980's, the path to renewed growth and development in the 1990's, its participation in political exercises at the turn of the century, its expanded representation in government policy making and advisory bodies in the 2010s, and its continuing advocacy for farmers' welfare through mass media and virtual platforms in recent years

Throughout the day, several panel discussions will assess the accomplishments of the Federation both at the farmer and the national level, and provide insights into the future of the Federation in the decades to come. The day-long event will be capped by a salu-salo and informal reunion among the FFF's leaders and supporters.

President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr. has accepted our invitation to be the principal guest of honor, in recognition of the late President Ferdinand E. Marcos, Sr.'s legacy in the field of social justice and agrarian reforms as well as President Marcos, Jr.'s leadership in the passage of the New Agrarian Emancipation Act.

The FFF - through its current Board Chairman, former Agriculture Secretary Leonardo Q. Montemayor - welcomes all its members, officers, supporters and associates to this Platinum Anniversary celebration.



President Ferdinand E. Marcos signs Presidential Decree No. 27 declaring the emancipation of rice and corn tenant-farmers in the country on October 21, 1972. To President Marcos' right is FFF President Jeremias U. Montemayor, and to his left is Secretary Conrado F. Estrella, Sr. of the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR).



Re-enactment of the signing of PD No. 27 during the signing of the New Agrarian Emancipation Act by President Ferdinand E. Marcos, Jr. last July 7, 2023. At the left is FFF National Manager Raul Montemayor. To the right of President Marcos, Jr. is DAR Secretary Conrado M. Estrella III.



President Ferdinand E. Marcos (right) addresses the concerns of FFF members and supporters at the front steps of the Bureau of Lands building in Agrifina Circle, Manila on November 7, 1969.



President Marcos welcomes FFF leaders (wearing dark FFF T-shirts) to Malacanang on October 25, 1975. He also acted on various agrarian cases and concerns presented by the FFF. From left to right: DAR Secretary Conrado Estrella, FFF President Jeremias Montemayor, Mateo Bihag (FFF Batangas), Leonardo Montemayor, Alfonso Laguna (Bukidnon), Hipolito Misleng (Pangasinan), Feliciano Emperador (Pangasinan), (identity unknown), and Manuel Bueno (North Cotabato).



President Marcos greets FFF Bulacan president Alfredo F. Tolentino during the FFF's 18th national convention held at the Christ the King Seminary compound in Quezon City on October 3, 1971. Beside the President are Jeremias Montemayor and DAR Secretary Conrado F. Estrella.



President Marcos shakes hands with FFF Rizal president Miguel Cruz during the FFF national convention in 1971.

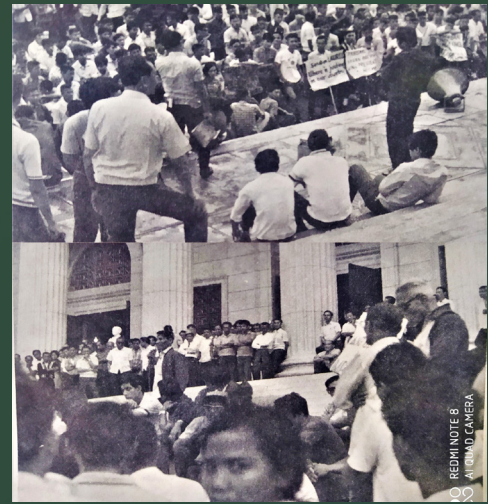


On September 6, 1968, the FFF and various youth groups staged a rally at the Malacanang Freedom Park (top left photo) for the immediate proclamation of 12 towns in the first district of Laguna as “land reform areas”, a move that was being resisted by landlords in the province.



Fortunately, the President stood firm. On September 14, he issued the directive which converted tenant-farmers in these areas into leaseholders. The signing took place at the Baker Hall inside the University of the Philippines College of Agriculture in Los Baños, Laguna.

The following month, the FFF held its 15th National Convention at the University of Santo Tomas gym in Manila with President Marcos as guest of honor and speaker.



THE FIRST OCCUPATION OF MALACANANG.

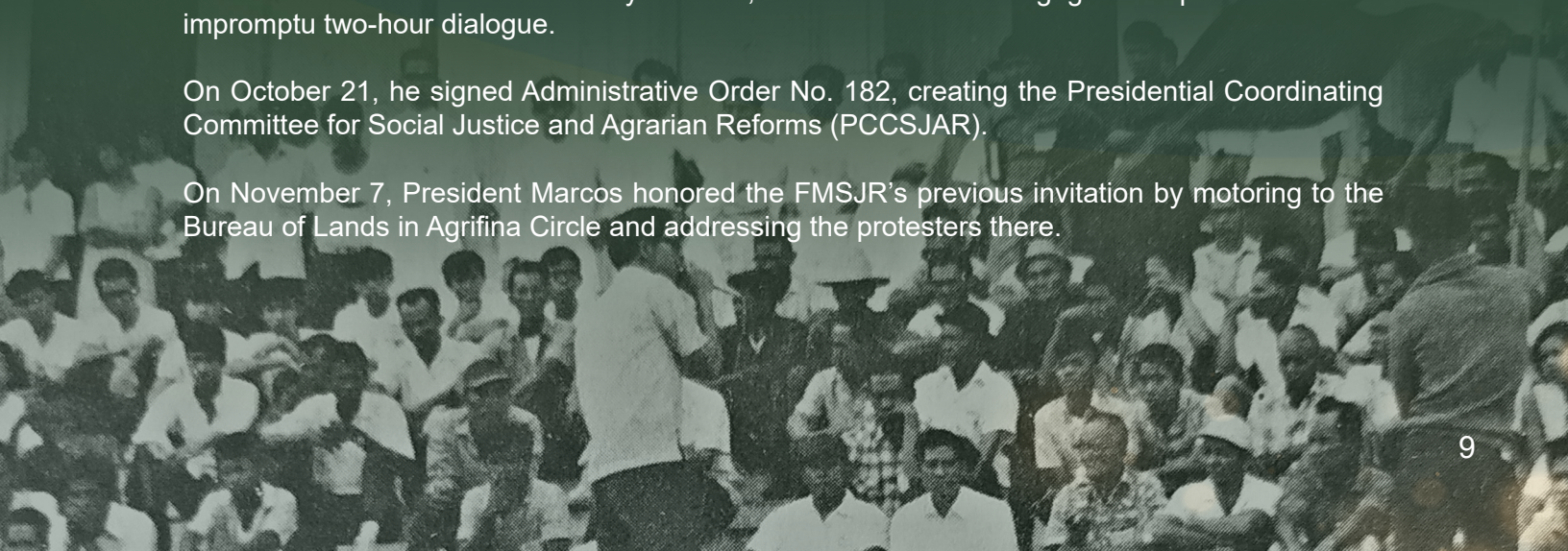
On September 23, 1969, several hundred soaking-wet peasant and student protesters breached the gate of the Malacanang presidential palace and “occupied” a major function hall. They wanted President Ferdinand E. Marcos to act decisively on urgent agrarian problems affecting hundreds of thousands of farmers nationwide.

For about a month already, the Federated Movement for Social Justice and Agrarian Reforms, led by the FFF, had been staging a “live-in” demonstration-picket at the entrance of the Bureau of Lands building along the Agrifina Circle in Manila’s Luneta/Rizal Park.

After a tense moment at the Kalayaan Hall, President Marcos engaged the protesters in an impromptu two-hour dialogue.

On October 21, he signed Administrative Order No. 182, creating the Presidential Coordinating Committee for Social Justice and Agrarian Reforms (PCCSJAR).

On November 7, President Marcos honored the FMSJR’s previous invitation by motoring to the Bureau of Lands in Agrifina Circle and addressing the protesters there.



Because of the unfair distribution of wealth and power in our society; the court which is supposed to defend the rights of the citizens under the law often becomes a weapon of the rich to exploit the poor.

This was proven in Napnapan, Pantukan, Davao del Norte when the Bhadys, together with their lawyer, Camilo Sabio, found themselves in jail for defending their rights as landowners.

Bhady had been asking for payment for damages from Cuison Lumber Company for the past eight years for constructing a road across his land. The company refused to recognize him, insisting that the land was public land though he held a title to it. In order to prevent the company trucks from trespassing on their land, he barricaded the road. When the company still insisted on using the road, the Bhadys put up a human barricade composed of their fellow farmers and members of Khi Rho. The company requested the court to issue an injunction to remove the human barricade. This was immediately given by Judge Sebastian of the Tagum Court of First Instance without hear-

ing first the side of the Bhadys. The couple did not obey the court order; thus, the judge ordered them, together with their lawyer who advised them to continue the barricade, jailed. The charge: contempt of court.

When FFF members and sympathizers from the other provinces learned of this, they, together with the students, demonstrated at the Department of Justice so that they could air their complaints to Justice Secretary Abad Santos. They also included among their complaints cases of farmers from different places involving the courts. Eighteen demands were presented to the justice secretary.

The demonstration was of no avail because the justice secretary walked out on the demonstrators saying he was powerless to act on their complaints and that he refused to talk with those who are not knowledgeable about the laws. The demonstrators decided to picket the department of justice until the cases presented before the justice secretary were acted upon. After several days of demonstrating, the justice secretary still refused to see them. The farmers and students

occupied the office of the justice secretary until the MPD, Metrocom and PC forced them to leave and brought them to police headquarters though there was no warrant of arrest. After several hours, they were released except for five leaders of the demonstration: Eddie Viriña, Charlie Avila, Noel Mondejar, Calixto de la Peña and Ed Garcia, S. J. of Lakasdiwa. The charges against them were tumultuous disorder and disrespect for the flag and national anthem.

Because of their imprisonment and the refusal of Abad Santos to face them, a big demonstration was held in Malacañang to ask the president to resolve the cases which the justice secretary refused to act upon. The justice secretary refused to act upon the cases of farmers received from the justice secretary. The audience with the president bore good results. The president gave the Presidential Coordinating Committee for Social Justice and Reforms greater power so that the cases brought before it could be resolved faster. The Bhadys and Sabio were released. Cuison was made to agree to pay for the damages brought about by the construction of the road.



letter from jail

Police Precinct 8
Manila
October 24, 1970

When a man has openly rebelled against the government and is caught by the forces of the Republic, he is graciously received by the President of that Republic.

When ordinary citizen-farmers and workers come to ask for justice under the law, the Secretary of Justice refuses to see them because they are unlettered peasants and cannot argue for their rights "properly."

Instead of showing humanitarian interest and compassion for their long endured problems, he charges them with crimes and has them imprisoned.

The Secretary of Justice charges helpless peasants with disrupting public order for damaging a ₱2.00 door lock and for entering his room to present their grievances. One cannot but admire the Justice Secretary for his concern for "Law and Order" and "proper procedure." He forgets that our turbulent times, distressingly characterized by a deceptive stress on "Law and Order" and the so called "due process of law" still witness the realities of institutionalized violence. This type of violence allows the dehumanization and dispossession of countless farmers and workers, and the underprivileged common man.

In our unjust society, one must be "polite," "submissive," and "patient" for "justice" to be meted out. Basic human and constitutional rights must be forgotten in the interests of propriety.

In the midst of a harried situation, it is indeed easy to lose one's perspective and to substitute the superficial for the essential.

ED GARCIA S. J., LAKASDIWA
CHARLIE AVILA, FFF
NOEL MONDEJAR, FFF
CALIXTO DE LA PEÑA, FFF
EDDIE VIRIÑA, FFF



On October 24, 1970, members and supporters (mostly students and youth) of the Federation of Free Farmers (FFF) "occupied" the office of Secretary Vicente Abad Santos at the Department of Justice, after the latter had refused to dialogue with them regarding eighteen (18) FFF concerns urgently needing his action.

The lead case was the jailing of FFF lawyer Camilo Sabio and members Mr. and Mrs. Romualdo Bhady, who were languishing in the Davao City jail for refusing a local court judge's order to lift their human barricade against a logging firm that been trespassing on the Bhady farm in Napnapan, Pantukan, Davao del Norte.

The protesters at the DOJ were hauled to the Western Police District headquarters along United Nations Avenue by the Manila police and the Philippine Constabulary-Metropolitan Command. They were subsequently released, except for the identified leaders who were detained - Edgardo Viriña (FFF executive vice-president), Charles Avila (national secretary), Calixto de la Peña (president for Western Batangas), Manuel Mondejar (head of the local affairs department), and Jesuit seminarian Edmundo Garcia (LAKASDIWA).

Their incarceration triggered multiple demonstrations and other protest actions within and outside Metro Manila, prompting President Ferdinand E. Marcos to call a meeting in Malacañang on October 31.

That meeting yielded the following results: release of the Bhadys and Sabio, payment of damages by the logging company, and strengthening of the adjudicatory powers of the Presidential Coordinating Committee for Social Justice and Agrarian Reforms (PCCSJAR).

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ment of justice



From June 12 to September 4, 1971, the FFF and allied organizations (farmers, workers, students, professionals and the religious) held a marathon 84-day live-in picket right at the Congress building's doorsteps to campaign for the passage of the Code of Agrarian Reforms of the Philippines (R. A. No. 6389).



FFF president Jerry Montemayor (wearing white shirt and glasses) meets with members from Southern Luzon. To his left is Victor Gerardo "Gerry" Bulatao (with glasses).



Land Authority Governor Conrado Estrella (right) talks with FFF leaders (from left) Arcadio "Adyong" Lorenzo of Bulacan, Renato "Boy" Navata, Charles "Charlie" Avila and Sinforoso "Archie" Atienza.

On September 11, President Marcos signed R.A. No. 6389 into law, which (among others) automatically converted share tenancy into the leasehold system nationwide and created the Department of Agrarian Reform.



Rallyists assemble in front of Plaza Lawton before proceeding to Congress for the start of the 84-marathon picket there for the passage of R.A. No. 6389



In 1969, female and male FFF members form a “human barricade” by lying across the main logging road between Puroks Kamanikan and Kalipay in Gingoog City, Misamis Oriental to protest against the Anakan Lumber Company (ALCO), which was preventing their passage to and from their landholdings in the area. Two ALCO security guards can be seen standing above them. In the background are falcata trees used by the settlers to block the road as well as the bulldozer, trucks and other heavy equipment of ALCO.



In 1970, students, youth and religious rally behind the call to release FFF lawyer Camilo “Mil” Sabio from his detention cell in Davao City.

Among the rallyists were Antonio “Tony” Pernia (wearing jacket), a seminarian at the Society of the Divine Word (SVD) seminary in Tagaytay City. In 2000, he was elected SVD Superior-General, the first Asian and the first Filipino to head an international religious order.



On November 10, 1970, some 4,000 mostly landless settlers organized by the FFF staged a march-rally in the municipality of Digos, Davao del Sur to press government for the release of pasture lands and other public lands long occupied and/or cultivated by them.

Among the areas that were eventually awarded to FFF member-petitioners were the Crumb Estate in Digos (through a directive by President Marcos in 1979), the Almendras ranch in Matanao, the Bendigo ranch in Sta. Cruz, and other government lands within the province.



In the late 1950s, the Federation of Free Farmers (FFF) led by Laurentino "Tino" Bascug and others were organizing the "sacadas" (migrant workers) who came from Panay Island for seasonal work in the sugarcane "haciendas" (plantations) of Negros Island and who toiled under exploitative working and living conditions. The FFF also organized the "dumaans" (permanent workers). Some 'hacenderos' (owners) said that FFF meant "Fire, Fire, Fire" because it was allegedly instigating the burning of sugarcane in their plantations as a form of protest.

In 1963, the FFF filed a class suit against Victorias Milling Company (then Asia's biggest sugar mill) and some 600 sugar plantation owners in Negros Occidental. In this "Swindle of the Century" case, the FFF sought to help some 30,000 sugar farm workers recover about Php 500 million, representing their mandated share in milling proceeds under the Sugar Act of 1952 (Republic Act No. 809).



The Federation of Free Farmers Davao del Norte chapter stages a Rally for Social Justice in the provincial capital of Tagum on August 25, 1969. Thousands of FFF members from all over the province demanded urgent action by the national government to resolve land-related cases involving settlers on public lands and tenants on private agricultural lands. The following month, the FFF started a two-month picket at the Bureau of Lands building in Agrifina Circle, Manila to present similar cases nationwide.

"COCONUT LEVY PUBLIC FUND"

—Coconut Farmers' Coalition

By Jing A. Mable-Cuevas

IN an unprecedented gesture of solidarity, some 21 farmers' organizations, representing some one million small coconut landowners, farmers, and farmworkers from all the coconut-producing areas of the country, have coalesced into a lobby group under the umbrella of the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA). In what may yet be its strongest statement, the group, in an attempt to recover what they perceive to be their rightful legacy, has declared public its stand that "the coconut levy is a public fund that is clearly affected with public interest." This directly contradicts what leaders of the coconut industry contend and which the courts have upheld—that the levy fund is private and, hence, should be returned to the agencies and companies assigned to administer it.

The coconut levy under question is the P60-70 billion in sequestered assets frozen by the Philippine Commission on Good Government (PCGG), the ownership of which is now under litigation. Such assets, farmers claim, were derived from the P9.7 billion collected pursuant to PD 276 which authorized the PCA to collect on "every first sale" of coconut products for which "no receipts (were) issued." "While the government under a democratic setup cannot appropriate sequestered funds for use of the small coconut farmers, this

historic event," as Virgilio M. David, PCA administrator calls it, "will show the Supreme Court where the farmers, who shouldered the most part of the levy, now stand." Enough, PCA and farmers are hopeful, for the courts to reverse its initial ruling on the coconut levy funds, in favor of the small coconut growers.

Unanimously hailed as a genuine revolutionary move that is likely to change for good the "texture of Filipino society," Luis Taruc, former Huk Supremo and present chairman of FAITH HukVets, recounts that "This is what we have all along been fighting for during and after the war but which we failed to achieve." Jerry Montemayor, president of the Federation of Free Farmers (FFF), reiterated that such empowerment of the farmers in general had been a continuing struggle of his organization which, he says, is now being realized by the coconut coalition. Recalling that during the martial law regime he had presented the book on account levy written by David to then President Ferdinand Marcos, he is quick to point out that the FFF's fight, although futile, had always included the common interest of the coconut farming community. Addressing some 30 leaders of the 21 farmers' organization, in attendance, David contends that depending on the conduct and result of the move to

recover the coconut levy funds, "President Fidel V. Ramos, who is wholeheartedly supporting the recovery efforts, may just turn out to be the greatest president this country will ever have." For by then, David reasons out, Ramos would have achieved the farmers' emancipation and empowerment which have eluded the nation since its inception.

Citing the coalition's move as a critical step toward the uplift of the coconut sector, David proposes that the coalition "go beyond the coconut levy" since its recovery would definitely affect other sectors in the industry to include processors and refineries, and would have bearing on many related issues as those on the coconut market and downstream industries. Recalling the Congress days of Luis Taruc and Jerry Montemayor, Taruc lauds the coalition in that its achievements will finally vindicate the real ownership of the coconut levy and could "before long be applied to those farmers in the rice, corn and other farms." Citing the coconut levy

SK-TIMES

"Fair, Practical & Trustworthy"

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PCA administrator David inspires small coco farmers

By Virgilio D. Viernes

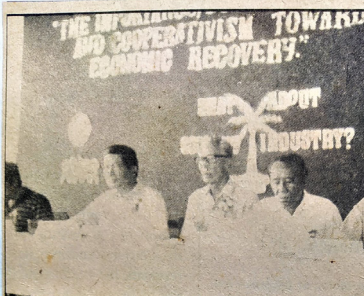


David with farmer leaders: PCA is now the agency for the many who are exploited against the few who exploit.

provincial chairman will take the Dausu celebration still is dead-end. When the coconut levy is finally issued to education, then the benefits", said but the light of owns tares of pledged to do to money from the time, he at farm-ids can rely the body, adhering differ-

ernment agency tasked with the development of the coconut industry which was created by virtue of P.D. 232 promulgated on June 30, 1973. This came to being during the Marcos regime where to date, the collection process of the Coco fund levy is seemingly the hottest item where anomalies allegedly existed. Cocofund levy according to the book authored by incumbent PCA Administrator David "was then collected in a manner similar to, or the same as, that of the stabilization fund levy. The difference was that here, a cocofund receipt was to be issued at first sale, while in the stabilization levy no receipt was to be issued." Another difference is in the amount levied. The cocofund levy was fixed at only P.55/ck of copra, which was (See page 4)

SULTAN KUDARAT TIMES



SKUFFCI 12th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION. Photo above shows: clockwise Philippine Coconut Administrator Virgilio M. David, FFP-FFCI National President Dean Jeremias Montemayor, Governor Nesthur M. Gumana of Sultan Kudarat, PCA President Luis Q. Cruz, and Leony Q. Montemayor Secretary General of the FFP-FFCI. Below are the top guests during the anniversary celebration. Photo below shows farmer delegates coming from the different municipalities of Sultan Kudarat.

PCA...

relatively small. The stabilization levy on the other hand ranged from a low of P15.00/ck to a maximum of P100.00/ck depending on the whims of pleasure of the PCA."

The visit of Administrator David once more proved the sincerity of the government to get back to the right track more particularly "in

defending the rights of the small coconut farmers," said the alter ego of President Ramos, and along the line David's thinking, a number of things can be presently achieved in the next twelve months that will redress the benefit of the deprived coconut farmers throughout the country.

Formation of farmer's foundation eyed to manage coco-levy assets

TAGUM, Davao del Norte — The Philippine Coconut Authority and member organizations of the Coalition of 21, a million strong national federation of the biggest farmers' organizations in the country, is working out the details of a plan to form a Coco Farmer's Foundation that will manage P70 billion worth of coco-levy assets they expect to recover from private claimants led Mr. Danding Cojuangco. This was disclosed by PCA Administrator Virgilio M. David and Free Farmers' Federation (FFF) President Jeremias Montemayor before a group of more than 300 farmer leaders they met in Davao recently.

The plan reportedly came about as a result of continuing consultations between the PCA and the leaders of 21 national farmers' and peasants organizations that recently banded together to work for the recovery of the

coco-levy assets, among other purposes. According to the plan, the Farmers' Foundation will manage the assets under PCA supervision. "PCA supervision is necessary because the coco-levy is a public fund and the PCA is the trustee. The farmers themselves, through their representatives in the Foundation, will be making the decisions on what to do with these assets and the incomes derived from them," explained David. "What is being contemplated at the moment is to keep the assets intact and use the income generated from them for projects that will directly benefit the farmers — such as hospitals, soft credit, education and scholarships, copra price stabilization, and direct support to the poor farmers among others," David added.

The coco-levy assets in question is still the subject of a case pending before the Supreme

Court. The Cojuangco side claims that the levy did not come from the farmers but contributed by 28 exporters/millers to establish a coconut consumers stabilization fund. The government claims that the levy was collected by PCA from the farmers through the exporter pursuant to PD 414 mandating the collection of the levy from every first sale of copra.

Some P10 billion was accumulated from 1973 to 1982 from a levy that averaged P60/P100 kgs of copra for the period. This was collected thru the end users the coconut millers/exporters, who in turn deducted the same from the price of copra paid to the farmers. The fund was later on used to buy the First United Bank, now UCPB, and the purchase the controlling share in San Miguel Corporation, among other businesses.

The FFF's active involvement in the recovery of funds and assets generated under the various coconut levies began in the latter part of the 1970s with the publication of the masteral thesis of Col. Virgilio David (then military supervisor over the Philippine Coconut Authority).

During the Ramos administration, David was appointed as PCA Administrator.



FFF leader Guillermo "Memo" Palomera hands out a land title to a Mangyan member in Mindoro Oriental. Photo was taken sometime in the late 1960s or early 1970s.



In 1971, some 500 members of the FFF and the Pulangihon tribal community in Bukidnon, led by FFF Provincial President Glicerio "Boy" Tan and Datu Victorio Dulag, occupied around 400 hectares within the 3,400-hectare reservation of the Central Mindanao University (CMU) in Musuan, Maramag, Bukidnon. Earlier, the lumads had been displaced from their ancestral lands by the CMU which then failed to deliver on its promise to resettle them. Photo shows Fr. Vincent Cullen, SJ, who was also then a FFF National Chaplain, leading a prayer for the protesters.

On October 3, during the FFF's 18th National Convention held at the Divine Word Mission Seminary gymnasium, President Marcos ordered the segregation and distribution of a portion of the CMU reservation in favor of the lumads. However, before the order could be carried out, martial law was declared the following year. The lumads' case lay dormant and then, in 2016, the Supreme Court ruled that the CMU reservation was exempted from coverage of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law.

Still and all, the months-long demonstrations carried out by the FFF and allied groups in 1971 opened the minds of policymakers and the general public to the plight of indigenous peoples in their ancestral lands. In 1997, President Ramos signed Republic Act No. 8371, or the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA), which recognized the right of all lumads to their ancestral domain.



The FFF has been helping some 1,000 families of "lumads" (indigenous people) in Quezon municipality, Bukidnon province who have been living in tents and shanties along the national highway since 2016. They were forcibly displaced from their ancestral lands, allegedly by the Kiantig Development Corporation (KDC), which is reportedly owned by the mayor of Quezon and is a contract grower of Del Monte Philippines.



The first national office of the FFF was a dilapidated building at the back of the Ateneo Law School along Padre Faura Street, in Manila. The building had been bombed during World War II. (Photo taken in the late 1950s)



Leadership Formation Courses held in Toril, Davao City in the early 1970s. The LFC was a 35-day residential course for organizers of the FFF. Subject matters included: FFF Social Philosophy and Program, Educational-Organizational Philosophy and Methods, Laws on Agrarian Reform and Public Lands, Basic Documentation of Farmers' Problems, and Spiritual Retreat.



Participants of a Free Farmers Cooperative, Inc. (FFCI) Basic Course at the FFF National Training Center in Mamatid, Cabuyao, Laguna from March 12 to 25, 1973.



FFF President Jerry Montemayor congratulates a graduate of the LFC at the closing program in Victorias, Negros Occidental on May 10, 1970. The LFC was the primary training program for FFF educator-organizers.



Members and officers of the Dilag ng Katipunan (Ladies of the Federation) pose before the FFF provincial office in Mamatid, Cabuyao, Laguna on September 27, 1970.



Participants of a FFF Women Organizers Seminar held in Koronadal, South Cotabato.



National Women's Seminar held in May 1979 at the FFF national training center in Tandang Sora, Quezon City. Among the trainors, kneeling in front, were Laurentino "Tino" Bascug and "Mateo" Ting Bihag.



In the 1980s, the FFF and the FFF Cooperatives, Inc. (FFFCI) trained scores of young women, who provided vital bookkeeping services for their local chapters/affiliates. The picture shows Sarah Rautraut (left), then national bookkeeper, supervising the on-the-job training at the FFF-FFCI national office of Juliet Puto (center) and Araceli Descallar (right) of the Davao del Norte FFF-Free Farmers Cooperative, Inc.



More than 50 years ago, a pool of volunteer student/youth leaders recruited by the FFF conducted Social Awareness Seminars in schools and seminaries throughout the Philippines. These included SVD seminarian Antonio “Tony” Pernia (left top photo, wearing jacket); Evelyn Manding of the College of the Holy Spirit and SVD seminarian Jose “Joe” Ledesma (upper middle photo), Ateneo de Manila student Manuel “Butch” Montes (upper right photo), and Gerardo “Gerry” Bulatao (lower left photo, wearing glasses).



National Convention of the Junior Free Farmers (FFF’s youth arm) held at the Pedring Aquino FFF National Training Center in Mamatid, Cabuyao, Laguna on January 27 to 29, 1973.



Jerry Montemayor (right) and the FFF exerted a strong influence on the religious sector, especially on how it viewed social problems and the role of the Church(es) in addressing them.



Annual assembly of FFF chaplains held at the National Training Center in Mamatid, Cabuyao, Laguna in April 1972.



Jerry Montemayor (middle row, left) in Sigaboy, Davao Oriental with Fathers Michael "Mike" Hiegel and Thomas "Tom" Marti of the Maryknoll Missionaries order. Starting in the late 1960s, the Maryknoll fathers under Bishop Joseph Regan of Tagum supported the FFF's work of organizing small farmers and extending legal and other services to them in the Davao provinces.



Pope John Paul II warmly embraces Jerry Montemayor during the Holy Father's installation to the Papacy at the Vatican in October 1978. Earlier, then Karol Cardinal Wojtyla and Jerry Montemayor had served together for several years as members of the Pontifical Council on the Laity under Quebec Archbishop Maurice Cardinal Roy and Pope Paul VI.



FFF secretary-general Leonardo Montemayor (2nd from left) was among those who greeted President Aquino during her arrival for the signing of the two laws on cooperatives at the Philippine International Convention Center.



FFF president and FFFCI board chairman Jeremias Montemayor spoke at the national symposium on cooperatives sponsored by NATCCO sometime in the late 1970s.

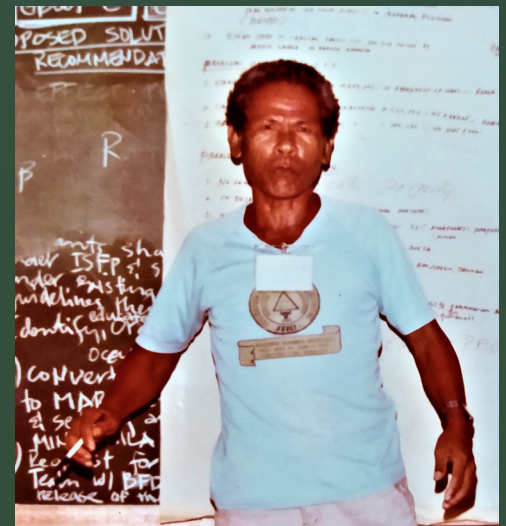


Meeting at the San Clemente (Tarlac) Farmers Cooperative Marking Association in San Clemente, Tarlac. The San Clemente FACOMA – an affiliate of the FFFCI – was one of ONLY two surviving FACOMAS in the country in the 1990s.



Cooperatives Development Under-secretary Orlando J. Sacay during the FFF-FFFCI general assembly in Tagum, Davao del Norte sometime in the mid-1980s.

On March 10, 1990, President Corazon C. Aquino signed the Cooperative Code (Republic Act No. 6938) and R.A. No. 6939, which created the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA). The FFF and its cooperative arm -- the Federation of Free Farmers Cooperatives, Inc. (FFFCI) partnered with the National Confederation of Cooperatives (NATCCO), the National Market Vendors Service Cooperative (NAMVESCO) and the Philippine Federation of Credit Cooperatives (PFCCO) for the passage of the new laws.



FFF-FFFCI leader Alfonso V. Laguna of Bukidnon was one of the first presidential appointees to the CDA board.



A cooperative store in San Francisco, Agusan del Sur. Some cooperatives started out with as little as Php 50 in capital from members. The Free Farmers Cooperative, Inc. (FFCI) was initially set up in 1966 as a national primary cooperative with individual farmers as members due to stringent registration requirements at the time. Barrio cooperatives operated as “local units” of the national primary. Eventually, barrio chapters were consolidated into provincial primaries, while the FFCI was converted into a national federation, - the Federation of Free Farmers Cooperatives, Inc. (FFFCI). The FFFCI is now called the Federation of Free Farmers Cooperatives (FFFC).



Members in Davao hauling their products to market using their coop's jeep.



Graduates of a cooperative bookkeeping course held in Toril, Davao City in 1977. The FFCI organized trainors' training programs for accountants and management staff, who then conducted “echo” seminars in their respective provinces. Selected bookkeepers were trained on auditing and eventually served as assistants of external auditors who regularly prepared the financial statements of the cooperatives.



Coop members in front of their local unit store and warehouse in Davao del Norte



Inauguration of the Chili Processing Center of the Isulan Free Farmers Biofarming Producers Cooperative in Sultan Kudarat on March 8, 2021. The processing center was established to provide additional sources of income for rice and corn farmer-members. Because prices of fresh chili often go down drastically during the harvest season, the processing center allows members to preserve and add value to raw chili and sell them for better prices during the off-season rainy months.



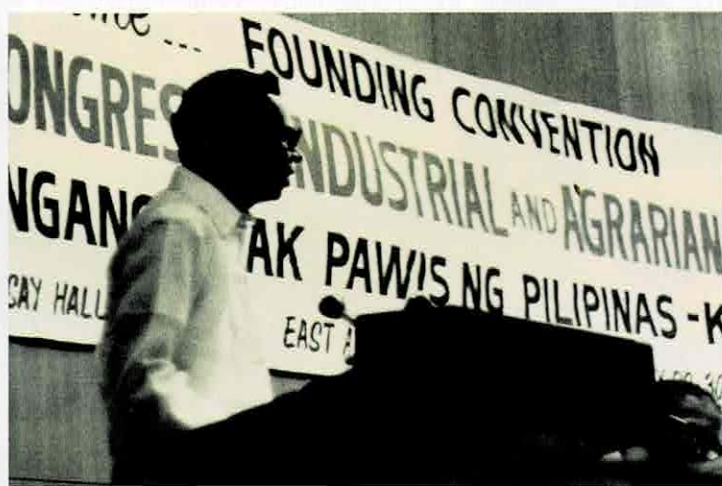
The Alicia Neighborhood Multi-Purpose Cooperative, Inc. (ALNEMPCO) completes its initial/trial delivery of five (5) tons of dehusked whole coconuts to the processing plant of Axelum Resources Corporation in Medina, Misamis Oriental after a twelve (12) hour trip from Alicia, Zamboanga-Sibugay. Romeo "Romy" Chan, Axelum's Board Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, and a supporter of the FFF during his student days, arranged for the priority unloading of deliveries from ALNEMPCO. Axelum - through its Fiesta brand - is a global leader in the manufacture and export of top quality dessicated coconut, coconut milk (liquid and powder), coconut water, and others.



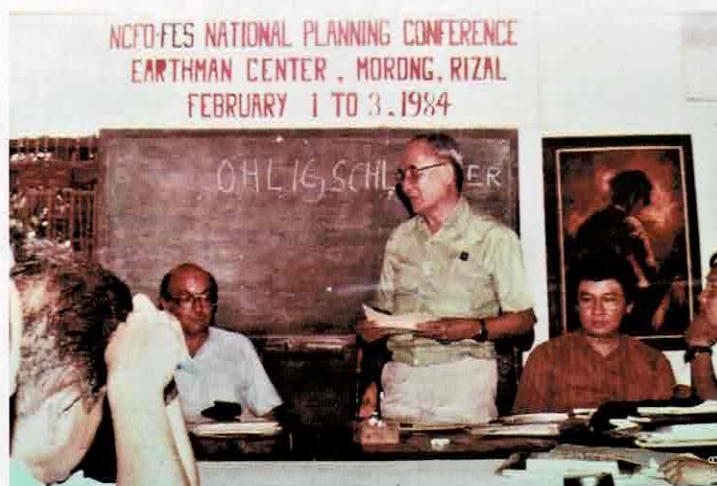
Virgin coconut oil (VCO) project of the Tagoyango Free Farmers Cooperative in Sibagat, Agusan del Sur.



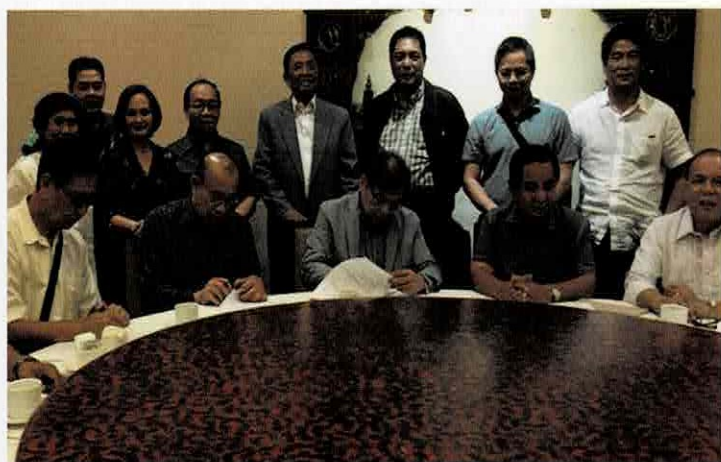
Corn Nitz (crispy corn) products of the Pindangan 2nd Primary Multi-Purpose Cooperative for sale at the Christmas Fair organized by the Department of Trade and Industry-Tarlac Office at the SM and Magic Star Malls in Tarlac City last December 2020. The coop and its members are affiliated to the Federation of Free Farmers and the FFF Cooperatives.



Also acknowledged as a pillar of the labor movement, FFF President Jerry Montemayor addresses the founding convention of the Philippine Congress of Industrial and Agrarian Workers on May 29 and 30, 1972. The coalition brought together the FFF and the two largest industrial labor federations – Philippine Confederation of Free Trade Unions (PHILCONTU) and Philippine Association of Free Labor Unions (PAFLU).



In 1984, the National Congress of Farmers Organizations (NCFO) was the biggest aggrupation of small farmers/rural workers associations in the country. It was headed by Jeremias U. Montemayor, FFF president. Photo shows Luis M. Taruc (standing), NCFO vice-president and chairman of the Federation of Agrarian and Industrial Toiling Hands-HUK Veterans, Inc. (FAITH-HUK VETS).



August 6, 2015 signing of the constitution and by-laws of the labor-peasant party called KATIPUNAN (Katipunan ng mga Manggagawa at Magsasaka ng Pilipinas) at the Manila Hotel. Among the signatories are (front row, from left): Rodolfo Capoquian (for OBRERO), Leonardo Montemayor (FFF), former Senators Ernesto F. Herrera (for the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines) and Jose Lina, and former Labor Secretary Ruben D. Torres.



FFF delegates Iya Abrazado, Sally Duquesa, Mimi Samson, Arlene Tolentino and Leonardo Montemayor attend the 2nd national convention and 5th founding anniversary of the National Trade Union Congress-Philippines on August 18, 2023 in Quezon City. With them is Milagros "Jhing" Ogalinda (2nd from left), newly elected president of NTUC-PH. Jhing is the first-ever female head or president of a national labor center in the Philippines.



Participants from the Philippines attend a seminar on agrarian reform at the Land Reform Training Institute (LRTI) in Taoyuan, Taiwan. The FFF sent several leaders and delegations to the LRTI to learn about agrarian reform.



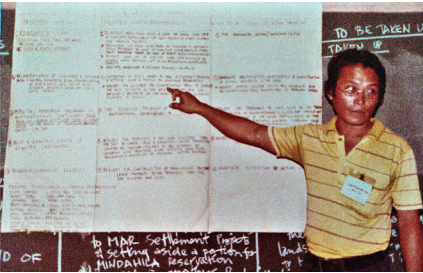
FFF farmer-technicians from the bio-farming program attend a technology seminar at the Asian Vegetable Research and Development Center (AVRDC), or World Vegetable Center, in Taiwan in 2009. This was followed by farm visits organized by the Taiwan Farmers Association. (The delegates were stranded in Taiwan due to the onslaught of Typhoon Ondoy. Short of funds, they stayed in one hotel room for several days.)



The National Agricultural Cooperative Federation (NACF) of South Korea hosted a study-visit of FFF officials in June 2006.



The FFF organized the Environment Committee session of the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP) at the International Rice Research Institute in Los Banos, Laguna from October 25-28, 1993. The FFF was an affiliate of IFAP. From left are: Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Angel Alcala, FFF president Jerry Montemayor, President Fidel V. Ramos, SANDUGUAN Chairman Benjamin Cruz.



Seminars conducted by the FFF and the NCFO to help affiliates in planning and implementing the ISFP in their respective organizations and areas.

On July 28, 1982, President Ferdinand E. Marcos signed Letter of Instruction No. 1260, establishing the Integrated Social Forestry Program (ISFP). This law applied to PUBLIC lands the “land-to-the-tiller” and social justice policies of his administration. The LOI introduced the novel - even revolutionary - concept and approach of securing the tenure of “kaingeros” (slash-and-burn settlers) and other bonafide occupants of forest lands through the issuance of 25-year renewable Certificates of Stewardship Contract (CSCs). Previously, they had been treated as “squatters” and subjected to criminal prosecution and ejectment from their occupations. The FFF was the major proponent of the ISFP, which was endorsed by Ministers Jose C. Leido, Jr. (Natural Resources), Conrado F. Estrella (Agrarian Reform) and Arturo R. Tanco, Jr. (Agriculture).

FFF Sloping Agricultural Land Technology (SALT) and contour farming projects in Magsaysay, Talibon, Bohol (left photo) and Canlaon City, Negros Oriental (right photo) from the late 1970s to the mid-1980s. Selected FFF members underwent training at the ODISCO (organic, diversified, integrated scientific, cooperative) FFF farming school in Victorias, Negros Occidental and the Mindanao Baptist Rural Life Center in Bansalan, Davao del Sur. Their field work was supervised by FFF leaders and DAR Region 7 Director Frank P. Dinsay.



REDMI NOTE 8
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Community pantry of the Minapasuk Upland Farmers Agri-Venture Marketing Cooperative (MUFAMCO) during the COVID pandemic. The group is one of the biofarming clusters organized by the FFF in Calatrava, Negros Occidental.



In November 2013, the FFF implemented a relief and rehabilitation program for members affected by Typhoon Yolanda in Biliran, Iloilo, Cebu and Bohol. Relief goods from the ABS-CBN Foundation were distributed to affected areas.

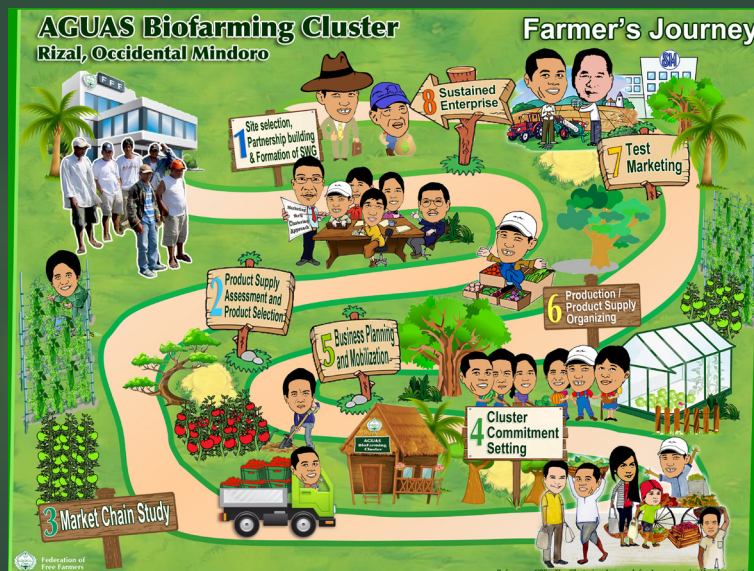
Additional assistance came from the Japan Central Union of Agricultural Cooperatives (JA ZENCHU) and Agriterra of the Netherlands.



Distribution of relief goods in Naval, Biliran.



Children sit on sacks of relief supplies prior to their distribution to affected families in Balasan, Iloilo.



The biofarming cluster approach starts with the identification of the project site and organization of cluster members. After assessing their production capacities and potential market requirements, the cluster members plan out and implement their production system so that they can supply their target markets continuously and profitably. The process is carried out repeatedly until the cluster evolves into a sustainable biofarming enterprise.

Cluster development activities include “farmscaping” and reconfiguration of farms, production of biofertilizers and biopesticides, seedling generation and planting, assignment of quotas and planting schedules for farmers, and then group harvesting and marketing. Some clusters have also gone into food processing not only for value adding but also to absorb products when market prices are low, specially during peak harvest periods.



Last December 2020, the Davao City Free Farmers Cooperative (DCFFC) delivered 22,000 bangus (milkfish) fingerlings, courtesy of the Davao City Agriculturist Office, to the Davao City Mariculture Operators Association in barangay Dumalag, Matina, Davao City. The fingerlings were transferred to two floating fish cages ("garungan"), measuring 10 meters by 10 meters, which were also constructed by the DCFFC.



One of the six (6) offshore fish cages and sixteen (16) stationary bag nets established by the Alicia Neighborhood Multi-Purpose Cooperative (ALNEMPCO), an affiliate of the FFF-FFFC based in Alicia, Zamboanga-Sibugay. The cooperative was able to secure a credit line from the Agricultural Credit Policy Council (ACPC) of the Department of Agriculture (DA) to finance part of the project. According to ALNEMPCO Chairman Cris Batonghinog, a "hulbot-hulbot" operator agreed to cease his destructive fishing practice after he was assured of coop financing to put up his own fish cage. "Hulbot-hulbot" gear uses weighted nets, which are dragged along the sea floor to catch fish, destroying corals in the process.



In the late 1980s, the Iloilo Free Farmers Cooperative, Inc. (ILOFFCI) embarked on a marketing venture to support its members operating in the rich fishing areas of Estancia and Carles, Iloilo. The fish catch were transported to Iloilo City.



At the request of Chairman Cris Batonghinog of the Alicia Neighborhood Multi-Purpose Cooperative (ALNEMPCO) in Zamboanga-Sibugay province, Alicia Mayor Remberto Sotto recently convened an inter-agency meeting to tackle the still widespread problem of illegal fishing in the municipality. ALNEMPCO's presented its program to establish more fish cages, stationary bag nets (fish traps), fish vending, seaweeds culture and other operations which will also serve as alternatives to illegal fishing practices.



Mary Odiaman is the President of the FFF Sultan Kudarat chapter and Chairperson of the Isulan Free Farmers Bio-farming Producers Cooperative (IFFABCO).



Rosalinda "Linda" Angeles is the President of the FFF Bulacan chapter. She is also an elected member of the Sectoral Council, representing farmers and landless rural workers, in the National Anti-Poverty Commission.



Susan Llamido is the General Manager of the Davao City Free Farmers Cooperative (DCFFC). She is a National Policy Board Member and Chairperson of the Women's Committee of the FFF.

Sally Duquesa is the General Manager of the Pindangan 2nd Primary Multi-Purpose Cooperative in Camiling, Tarlac. The coop and its members are affiliated to the FFF and the Federation of Free Farmers Cooperatives (FFFC).





FFF National Manager Raul Montemayor (back row, third from the left) poses with the Philippine delegation to the Ninth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO) held in Bali, Indonesia in 2013. He was designated as an official adviser to the negotiating team of the Department of Agriculture.



FFF leaders Fidel Samson, Sr. of Agusan del Sur (third from left) and Ruben Presilda of Occidental Mindoro (third from right) were awarded plaques of recognition for their contribution to the cooperative movement during the National Cooperative Summit held in October 2016.



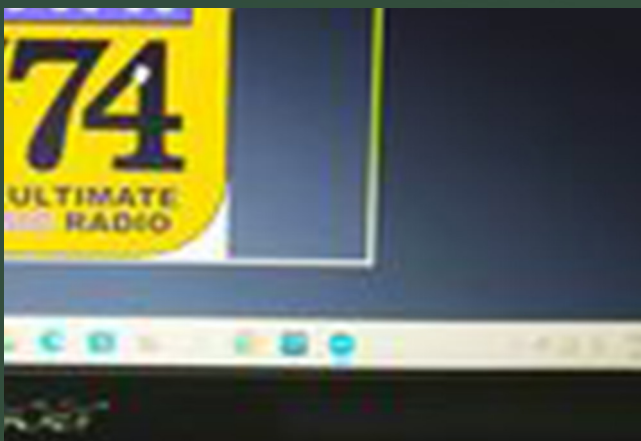
FFF leaders pose with then National Food Authority (NFA) Administrator Tomas Escarez after a dialogue on NFA programs during the FFF General Assembly in 2019.



Blessing of the new FFF and FFFC headquarters in Cubao, Quezon City in October 2016.



The FFF's opposition to the proposed tariff cuts on rice imports received wide coverage in the mass media. The Manila Bulletin highlighted the FFF position on its front page.



FFF Board Chairman Leonardo Montemayor was frequently interviewed to get his views on various issues, such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL), and other concerns of farmers.



The FFF spearheaded the campaign to delay the country's accession to the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) trade agreement, arguing that Filipino farmers well ill-prepared for open competition in the world market. After the Senate concurred with the treaty after almost a year of delay, the FFF joined other cause-oriented groups in launching a Bantay RCEP program to monitor the impact of the agreement on the agricultural sector. A "Buy Filipino" campaign was also started to encourage consumers to patronize local products.



The FFF joined other farmer organizations in a protest action on September 18, 2023 against proposals to reduce tariffs on rice imports. The Pindangan 2nd Primary Multi-Purpose Cooperative, an affiliate of the FFF and FFCC based in Camiling, Tarlac, participated in the activity. President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr. subsequently shelved the controversial proposals of his economic advisers.



FFF leaders discuss plans and programs of the Department of Agriculture with then DA Secretary Manny Piñol.



FFF President Jerry Montemayor delivers a speech during a proclamation rally for the candidates of the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan (KBL) to the Interim Batasang Pambansa. He was elected Assemblyman in 1978.



FFF members campaign for the Alyansang Bayanihan ng mga Magsasaka, Manggagawang-Bukid at Mangingisda (ABA) party-list which was established through the initiative of the FFF. The ABA won a seat in the 11th, 12th and 14th Congresses.



FFF Secretary-General Leonardo Montemayor was appointed as Secretary of the Department of Agriculture from 2001 to 2002 by President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. His party-list seat was taken over by Dioscoro A. Granada. Here, Sec. Montemayor meets with fisherfolk representatives in the Cordillera Administrative Region.



Grassroots campaign by FFF members for the ABA-AKO (Farmers-Urban Poor) party-list coalition in 2007.



The FFF had long and generally productive interaction with Fidel V. Ramos, starting when he was Chief of the Philippine Constabulary in 1972 (left and bottom photos).

President Ramos appointed Leonardo Montemayor as Peasant Sector Representative in the House of Representatives during the 9th (1992-95) and the 10th (1995-98) Congress. He appointed FFF Bukidnon head Glicerio "Boy" Tan as Peasant Sector Congressman in 1995.



In Malacanang with President Ramon Magsaysay (left). FFF National President Jerry Montemayor (2nd from left) introduces FFF National Chaplain Hector Mauri, S.J. (4th from left) and FFF leaders.



Philippine President Ramon Magsaysay (center, gesturing) frequently visited the barrios to listen to the concerns of farmers. FFF President Jeremias Montemayor is at Magsaysay's left. (Photo taken sometime between 1957 and 1959.)

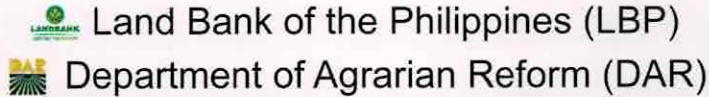


In 1999, President Joseph E. Estrada (middle) conferred on FFF President Jeremias Montemayor (right) the Presidential Golden Plow Award for his outstanding contributions to agrarian reform and social justice in the Philippines.



FFF President Leonardo Montemayor guides President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo through the FFF photo exhibit during the FFF's 50th anniversary celebration on October 25, 2003.

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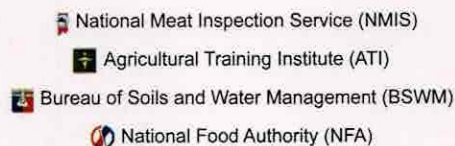
MAJOR SPONSOR



SPONSORS



SUPPORTERS



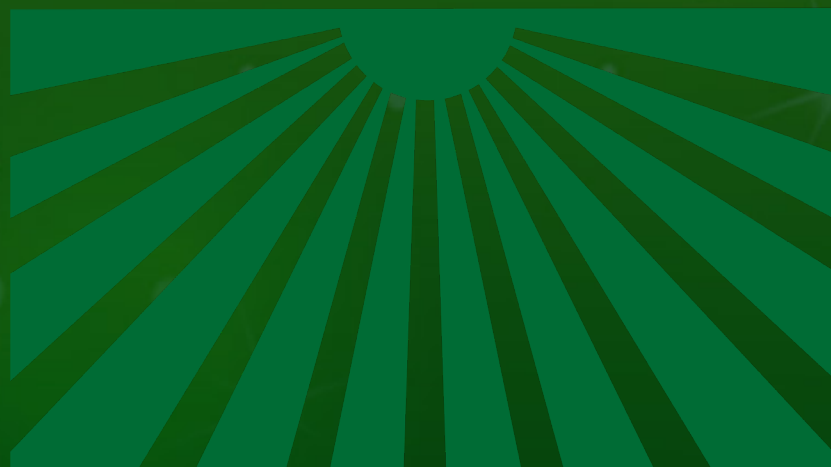
Former President and House Deputy Speaker Gloria Macapagal Arroyo
Office of Mayor Joy Belmonte
Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation (PCIC)
Senator Cynthia Villar
Cong. Arjo Atayde
Philippine Army Finance Center Producers Integrated Cooperative
First Community Cooperative



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