



PCAF QUARTERLY



PCAF BAGS DA PAS TOP 1 PERFORMER

The Philippine Council for Agriculture and Fisheries (PCAF) emerged as the Department of Agriculture's Performance Appreciation System (PAS) Top 1 Performer under the Cluster 3: Attached Agencies Category for its overall performance in Fiscal Year 2024.

The award was given on April 29, 2025, during the Department of Agriculture (DA) Management Committee Meeting at the Lopez Convention Hall, Bureau of Soils and Water Management, Visayas Avenue, Quezon City.

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PCAF earns ISO 9001:2015 recertification, reinforcing quality commitment

PCAF reaffirmed its dedication to excellence in management and service delivery by successfully passing the ISO 9001:2015 recertification audit on March 17, 2025.

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Former RAFC Chair takes helm as new PCAF Executive Director

PCAF officially welcomed its new Executive Director, former Bicol Regional Agricultural and Fishery Council (RAFC) Chairperson Bernadette "BidiBidi" De Los Santos, after her oath-taking ceremony presided over by Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu-Laurel, Jr. on April 28, 2025.

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From page 1: PCAF bags DA PAS Top 1 Performer

DA assessed its agencies using the Performance Appreciation System (PAS), as detailed in the DA Administrative Order No. 9, Series of 2024. The evaluation focused on four Key Dimensions of Accountability: physical performance, financial performance, good governance, and citizen or client satisfaction.

For Cluster 3, the National Fisheries Research and Development Institute bagged second place, while the Agricultural Credit Policy Council secured third place.

Other awardees included the Cagayan Valley Regional Field Office II for Cluster 1-Regional Offices; the Bureau of Agricultural and Fisheries Product Standards for Cluster 2-DA Bureaus; and the Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation for Cluster 4-Attached Corporations. ■

From page 1: Former RAFC Chair takes helm as new PCAF Executive Director



"BidiBidi"
Bernadette De Los Santos

Immediately following her oath, Director BidiBidi met with the agency's Division and Section Chiefs to learn how everyone works and gain firsthand insights into each operating unit's internal operations.

"As the newly installed Executive Director of PCAF, my immediate plans would include knowing the agency itself, because this is the first time I am holding a government agency. Today's meeting with the PCAF divisions was enlightening for me. I also greatly appreciate their willingness to guide me through the agency's processes," said Exec. Dir. De Los Santos.

She also mentioned that PCAF, the participatory arm of the Department of Agriculture, will be an instrument for her to serve more communities because it is a venue for farmers to be heard and for issues to be dealt with.

"I know what the AFCs need. I think one of my plans is to go about and go around, and try to influence the regional offices to be more supportive of our AFCs in their particular regions," she added.

She further mentioned that she is keen to know more about the National Sectoral Committees, their respective chairpersons, and issues and concerns at the national level. ■



From page 1: PCAF earns ISO 9001:2015 recertification, reinforcing quality commitment



A total of 30 PCAF officials, composed of the top management, division chiefs, and section chiefs, attended the opening and closing meetings, where the Worldwide Quality Assurance (WQA) Philippines, Inc. Audit Team Leader presented the audit plan and the results, respectively.

Facilitated by PCAF's Management Section, the ISO audit is vital in affirming PCAF's dedication to delivering high-quality services.

Homer Alcon, the Audit Team Leader from WQA, headed the onsite assessment with his team performing audits on the agency's offices to verify compliance with the ISO 9001:2015 standards. Alcon commended the agency for its continued dedication to upholding the high standards required for ISO 9001:2015 Certification. The WQA team also included Florida Cornejo, Lily Agnes Picardo, and Elvin Almazar.

"Thank you so much to all of you. We did our best as a team. Let us continue to make it a habit to conform to the required standards," PCAF OIC-Executive Director Julieta E. Opulencia said. ■

PCAF leads first NCI-SRD Policy and Advocacy Working Group meeting for 2025, endorses key rural development resolutions



The Philippine Council for Agriculture and Fisheries (PCAF) spearheaded the first meeting of the National Convergence Initiative for Sustainable Rural Development (NCI-SRD) Policy and Advocacy Component Working Group (PA CWG) for 2025 on February 7 at the PCAF Apacible Hall A in Quezon City.

Presided by PCAF OIC Executive Director Julieta Opulencia, the meeting was attended by representatives from various government agencies involved in the NCI-SRD.

PCAF, the policy-making arm of the Department of Agriculture (DA), was designated as the chair of the PA CWG.

The NCI-SRD is a strategic partnership among four key government departments—the DA, the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), and the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG). These agencies work together to address poverty and promote sustainable development in rural areas, focusing on improving the lives of farmers, fishers, and upland communities.

During the meeting, the PA CWG reviewed and endorsed seven policy resolutions, including the approval of several Convergence Area Development Plans and recommendations for organizational improvements.

The group also discussed apparent, conflicting and overlapping laws, policies and programs that could hinder the effective implementation of the NCI-SRD. It was agreed that further reviews and comments would be provided on these policies in the next meeting.

The PA CWG agreed to organize an activity in March 2025 to update the Joint Administrative Order, inviting all concerned agencies and representatives to ensure coordinated efforts in rural development. To strengthen interagency collaboration, the PA CWG recommended intensifying coordination with member agencies to ensure their participation in future NCI-SRD meetings and activities.

The second PA CWG meeting took place on March 7, 2025, at the DA Central Office, where further discussions on rural development policies and programs through coordinated efforts and integrated service delivery were continued. ■



From Loss to Leadership: Flordeliza Maleon's Resilience in Navigating Life and Agricultural Challenges in CALABARZON

In the scenic province of Quezon, Flordeliza Maleon is a pillar of leadership and advocacy in the agriculture and fisheries sector. Her journey from working in a bank to being a farmer-leader is a testament to her perseverance, passion for continuous learning, and steadfast dedication to empowering her community.

Today, as the Chairperson of the Regional Agricultural and Fishery Council (RAFC) in CALABARZON, Maleon's leadership continues to make a significant impact on the region's farming and fishing communities.

Maleon's influence expanded in 2019, when she was appointed as the Provincial AFC Chairperson of Quezon. Under her leadership, the PAFC received the prestigious Outstanding PAFC Award at the 49th Gawad Saka: Parangal sa Natatanging Magsasaka at Mangingisda in 2020.

Until now, continuous learning is what motivates Maleon in her volunteerism journey. As she puts it, "You become addicted to learning within the AFC and that's what keeps me going." With her steady approach, the future of agriculture in CALABARZON and beyond continues to move forward, one step at a time, guided by the hands of a mother, leader, and advocate who remains an inspiration to all.

**This interview was conducted in September 2024. As of May 2025, Maleon has stepped down as the CALABARZON RAFC Chairperson.*



Other Lakbay Panayam Interviewees

Stay tuned for their feature articles on PCAF's official website: pcaf.da.gov.ph.



Maribel Orense
Mataasnakahoy, Batangas MAFC
Chairperson



Dr. Mary Ann Sayoc
National Sectoral Committee on
Fruits and Vegetables Chairperson



Virginia Ronquillo
Lucena City, Quezon Highly
Urbanized City AFC Chairperson

Lakbay Panayam

Beyond the Farm: The Role of CALABARZON AFCs in Community Development

The Agricultural and Fishery Councils (AFCs) in CALABARZON do more than just manage farming and fishing concerns. They are key players in the broader spectrum of community development, enhancing the livelihoods of farmers and fishers while fostering sustainable agricultural practices, infrastructure improvement, and policy advocacy. These councils, composed of farmers, fishers, and other stakeholders, serve as vital links between the private agricultural sector and the government.

In this Lakbay Panayam special feature of the Philippine Council for Agriculture and Fisheries (PCAF), Roel Fabillan, Demosthenes Hernandez, Arnel Curioso, and Loreto Basit of CALABARZON show how the AFCs are not only addressing the immediate needs of their constituencies but also laying the groundwork for long-term progress in the agriculture and fisheries sector.

Building Strong Partnerships for Development

A common thread running through the work of these AFC leaders is the importance of forging strong partnerships, especially with their respective local government units (LGUs).

Advocating for Policy Change

Aside from being the voice of farmers and fishers, the most important function of the AFCs lies in advocating for policy changes that benefit the local agricultural and fishery industries.

Education and Skill Development

Leadership in the CALABARZON AFCs goes beyond policy and advocacy—it also builds the capacity of individuals and communities.

Resource Optimization and Community Engagement

Effective resource management is another hallmark of the CALABARZON AFCs' success.

The efforts of the AFC leaders in CALABARZON transcend traditional farming concerns. Through strong partnerships, policy advocacy, education, resource optimization, and community engagement, they are cultivating a more sustainable and equitable agricultural and fishery sector. The works of Roel Fabillan, Arnel Curioso, Demosthenes Hernandez, and Loreto Basit exemplify how AFCs play a vital role in community development, ensuring that agriculture and fisheries are not just about farming but are integral components of broader economic, social, and environmental progress. These leaders are transforming their communities, proving that the road to a thriving, sustainable future extends beyond the farm.

**The Lakbay Panayam articles featured are shortened versions. For the full stories, visit PCAF's official website at pcaf.da.gov.ph.*



Roel Fabillan
Laguna PAFC Chairperson



Demosthenes Hernandez
Quezon PAFC Chairperson



Arnel Curioso
Liliw, Laguna MAFC Chairperson



Arnel Curioso
Sariaya, Quezon MAFC Chairperson



PCAF facilitates 29 constructors' performance evaluations on DA infra projects

The Philippine Council for Agriculture and Fisheries (PCAF), as the Department of Agriculture-Constructors' Performance Evaluation System (DA-CPES) Implementing Unit, successfully facilitated 29 evaluations across the country from January to April 2025.

These evaluations involved a wide array of DA-funded agricultural infrastructure projects, including cold storage facilities, farm-to-market roads, irrigation systems, processing centers, biosecured swine housing facilities, and warehouses. The CPES serves as a tool to ensure accountability and performance among constructors involved in government infrastructure projects.

Using the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA)-approved CPES checklist,

accredited evaluators assess key project aspects such as workmanship, timeliness, materials used, environmental, safety and health compliance, and resource deployment. These parameters are part of a standardized evaluation framework designed to promote transparency, continuous improvement, and value-for-money in public infrastructure development.

Through CPES, PCAF helps ensure that infrastructure initiatives under the DA portfolio are held to high standards, reinforcing the agency's mission to support inclusive, sustainable, and resilient agricultural and fishery development. The reports from CPES activities intend to contribute to evidence-based policy-making and project improvement across the agriculture sector. ■

PCAF mobilizes stakeholders for 2025 participatory monitoring activities



For 2025, the PCAF has officially launched its Participatory Monitoring and Tracking (PMT) activities for Department of Agriculture (DA)-funded projects, starting with comprehensive efforts across the provinces of Central Luzon.

Led by the agency's Monitoring and Evaluation Section, and in close collaboration with the Regional and Provincial Agricultural and Fishery Council Chairpersons and Coordinators, the PMT teams thoroughly inspected 136 ongoing projects on March 10-13, 2025. These included critical infrastructure such as farm-to-market roads, and agricultural facilities and equipment in the region.

The initiative culminated with an Exit Conference on March 14, 2025, where the PMT findings were shared with DA-Regional Field Office III officials,

along with focal persons from the banner programs and the Regional Agricultural Engineering Division. Representing PCAF at the conference were OIC Executive Director Julieta Oplencia and Planning, Monitoring, and Knowledge Management Division Chief Floreliz Avellana. The conference served as a forum to discuss both the successes and challenges encountered by project recipients during implementation, followed by the presentation of recommendations for improvement.

The PCAF's PMT system plays a vital role in ensuring that DA budget resources are allocated strategically and utilized efficiently to address the pressing needs of the agri-fishery sector. This approach not only bolsters governance practices, but also promotes transparency, accountability, and effective management in DA projects and services. ■

**Some photos featured in the stories on this page were provided by the respective Regional Agriculture and Fisheries Information Sections (RAFIS) or DA Regional Field Offices (DA-RFOs).*

PCAF celebrates National Women's Month with virtual KUD on Right to Reproductive Health

"It is worth noting that reproductive health is not just a women's issue—it is a concern for everyone. Men, women, and all gender identities have reproductive health needs that must be addressed. Gender roles and societal norms often shape access to information and services, making it crucial to adopt an inclusive, gender-sensitive approach to healthcare," stated OIC-Executive Director Julieta Oplencia during the Philippine Council for Agriculture and Fisheries' (PCAF) Knowledge Unloading Day (KUD) on March 27, 2025.

Held in the celebration of National Women's Month, the Knowledge Management Section spearheaded the conduct of the KUD through Zoom online video conferencing. More than 130 PCAF employees and representatives from the national and local Sectoral Committee on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion attended the event.

The KUD aimed to raise awareness of how biological, social, and cultural factors, including gender norms, impact reproductive health and access to health services. It equipped participants with tools to challenge myths, reduce stigma, and promote open discussions on reproductive health in workplaces and communities. The event also explored policies and best practices supporting reproductive rights and equitable healthcare, fostering collaboration between government and private stakeholders for inclusive health initiatives.

Maria Daryl Leyesa, Sexual Health Empowerment Advocacy Project Coordinator of the Pambansang Koalisyon ng Kababaihan sa Kanayunan, served as the resource person for the activity. Leyesa shared her expertise on the importance of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), and the intersectionality of identity-based differences. She also discussed the 12 elements of the Republic Act 10354, also known as the Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Act of 2012.

In his closing message, OIC-Deputy Executive Director Cyril Soliaban said, "As we move forward, let's remember: breaking the silence is the first step, educating others is the next, but making action is what truly makes the difference. Together, we empower, we advocate, and we make the difference."



GAD CORNER

Shaping gender-responsive agriculture: Bicol AFCs take on policy advocacy, monitoring training



"*Lakas kasama ang iba, lakas para magbago, at lakas ng loob*," said gender equity, stakeholder, and community engagement specialist Carmen "Mench" Auste.

In the context of gender equity, equality, and social inclusion, a total of 35 Agricultural and Fishery Council (AFC) officers, members, and secretariat-coordinators of the Bicol Region gathered to hone their skills in creating gender-responsive and socially inclusive policies during the Shaping Gender Responsive Policy Advocacy and Monitoring (GRPAM) training on January 22 to 23, 2025 in Naga City in Bicol Region.

Facilitated by the PCAF-Capacity Development Section, in coordination with the PCAF-Gender and Development Focal Point System, the two-day training discussed the integration of gender perspectives into policy development, advocacy, and monitoring.

The participants examined key concepts, mainstreaming strategies, and the continuum of approaches—moving from gender-blind to gender-transformative. They also explored strategies to drive change among decision-makers.

Auste pointed out the importance of AFCs and why they need support in terms of gender inclusivity. She highlighted this through the context of "*Lakas kasama ang iba*" or working together and creating a unified and collective action along with other community-based or rural-based organizations.

She also discussed the "*Lakas para magbago*" concept. This encapsulated the support needed and enabling policy environment through the crafting of positive ordinances like administrative orders, guidelines, and laws from the barangay, municipal, provincial, regional, up to the national level.

Following the Bicol Region session, PCAF continued its nationwide rollout of the GRPAM training with a session in Tuguegarao City, Cagayan on March 19 to 20, 2025. ■

HR CORNER

PCAF strengthens Policy Development and Coordination Division with new officers

The Philippine Council for Agriculture and Fisheries (PCAF) reinforced its Policy Development and Coordination Division (PDCD) with the recent oath-taking of four Development Management Officers during separate ceremonies held at its office in Quezon City.

On February 4, 2025, Mark John Rey Awacay and Maiane Danisse Radan were officially welcomed into the PDCD team. Awacay was promoted to Development Management Officer (DMO) II under the Sectoral Policy Development Section (SPDS), while Radan took her oath as DMO I under the Strategic Concerns Section (SCS). The ceremony was administered by PCAF Officer-in-Charge Executive Director Julieta Oplencia, with other key officials in attendance.

On March 10, 2025, another oath-taking ceremony was held for newly appointed PDCD Chief Sarah Bales, who assumed the role of Development Management Officer V, and Jeean Ebor, who was appointed as DMO II under the SCS. Both pledged to support national policy development efforts and provide technical guidance to the National Sectoral Committees (NSCs).

OIC ED Oplencia commended the new appointees, expressing confidence in their contributions: "Your dedication will be invaluable to the agency, especially to PDCD, as we work to improve policy development and coordination with our private sector-partners."

These appointments mark a significant step in strengthening PCAF's policy development capabilities in support of the agriculture and fisheries sectors. ■



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The editorial team encourages everyone to photocopy and circulate this newsletter with proper acknowledgment. Everyone is also encouraged to contribute stories of individuals or organizations engaged in the development of the agri-fishery communities.

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