



FARMER MAKES MONEY IN INTEGRATED FARMING

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A rice farmer in Cabaruan, Naguilian, Isabela has decided to apply integrated farming and now he is making a lot of money.

In his 3.5700 hectares land with rice as the main crop, Eriberto R. De Ocampo, grows various fruit trees from calamansi, mangoes, guayabano, sweet tamarind and a lot more, other high-value crops and seedling propagation.



No idle land was left in his farm. He even raise hi-bred animals like goats (anglo and boer), sheep (St. Crovix, Katahdine), cattle (Brahman), chicken, ducks. Name it and his farm has it.

Because of his unique farming system, the Department of Agriculture awarded him as Outstanding Agricultural achievers "Gawad Saka" 2003, Outstanding Small Ruminant Farmer - 2nd Place (national level); Outstanding Swine Producer; Outstanding Small Ruminant Farmer; Outstanding High-Value Commercial Crop Farmer (regional and provincial level) and "Gawad Saka 2006" National awardee as Outstanding High

Value Crop Farmer-Grand prize, where he received his award form the Hon. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, President of the Republic of the Philippines.

from rice only to rice and other crops...

Mang Bert is a beneficiary under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program. He acquired 3.57 hectares of contiguous prime agricultural land and started to develop it as mainly a rice farm. He realized, however, that planting rice alone did not give him enough income. The four long months spent to cultivate rice is enough only to sustain daily subsistence.

Thus, in 1984, with the support of his wife Nenita Ramirez, a government employee and who belongs to a prominent family in Naguillian, conceptualized their farming system, decided to grow other crops besides rice. And before they even knew it, their income considerably increased. He devotes 30% of his family's land to rice and the rest to fruit trees, portion of it houses his animal production project.

on becoming a farmer...



To become a good farmer does not mean undergoing a series of reading and memorizing activities, a graduate of an agricultural course, but a unique career learned through experience, he being a Political Science graduate. He also believes that the trainings he attended such as Capability Building on Market Promotion and Marketing for Small Ruminants; Small Ruminants Artificial Insemination Skills Training; Poultry Production Training;

Swine Production; Cattle Production; Integrated Pest Management and Hybrid Rice Seed Production have helped him a lot as a farmer.

To many farmers, the word success ultimately means maximum yield. That is very true, he said, it can be attained with proper management coupled with hard work and humbling yourself. You can always hope for it, however, one must be flexible enough to adjust to the realities in life. Today, a farmer must consider the existing production system vis-à-vis the rapidly growing population and environmental degradation, thinking of a practical way to sustain life to the fullest.

Be wise, he advised. In any area of endeavor, commitment supplemented with wisdom is the key to success. A farmer must widen his sights beyond merely seeing the glow of the technology. It is always wise to ask: Is it compatible with my existing farming system? Also, a wise farmer must see the necessity, benefits and practicality of the technology. Timing is another thing Bert has learned in his years of farming. As a farmer, he considered the factors directly and indirectly affecting farming system-climate for instance.

a state of the art approach... .

Twenty years ago, he made a promise to himself to develop a piece of barren land into a lush forest of fruit trees. The forest is now a reality. The result: a botanical garden of varieties of fruit trees which includes longgan, lychee, durian, Thailand pomelo, Bangkok tamarind, mangoes, calamansi and many more. Here, too, maintains a storage building with solar dryer and at the same time a learning center where he



conducts lectures and technology demonstration for free to visiting students from different schools who sought advices on farm management, different people's organization on educational trip whether in the province or outside province. There is no secret to the success of the project – hard work, expertise and selfless fixation with fruit trees and farmers/ entrepreneurs, but above all, his daughter, Shalem, HRM graduate from St. Paul College, Quezon City; son Kenn, 2nd year college student at ISU, Ilagan, youngest Riber Jan, 3rd year veterinary medicine student at Gregorio Araneta College Foundation, dedicated commitment doing hands-on supervision in the maintenance of the family farm, not only does his daughter Shalem acts as his farm assistant but also as his financial adviser and manager.

pursuing life's passion ...

Although majority view and have difficulty adjusting in the agriculture environment as very stressful and demanding, the husband, wife and daughter tandem thinks otherwise.

They definitely agreed to that, but because they've always loved challenges, they seemed to have enjoyed the daily pressures and stress that they always experienced in the field of agriculture.

Mang Bert explained that he has his own unique way of influencing people wherein such traits can be used to change the perspective of people in agri-business, thus it played an important role in the production of agricultural products that are readily available in the market.



Ever since Mang Bert started his career in the field of agriculture, he never imagined engaging a career in animal/agricultural production, but said to himself that this is the industry that he loved to grow and become successful.

From then on, he took his stride in brisk yet successful manner, braving all obstacles and eventually giving his most precious profession to date, he quote " I would rather say that I have given my best, I'm a very committed person. I count my contributions before I celebrate success. I continuously look for ways on how I can add value, it is not really easy but it's fulfilling and a continuously learning experience".

For a busy-bee like Mang Bert, one may conclude him of having an influence round a clock and 25-hour human living. But he is like other farmers, juggling work and finding leisure in his almost droning life. His answers to such queries that utterly change impressions and will lead to realization that beyond his stature is a witty and amicable part.

a purpose-driven life ...



A life without an objective makes it futile and barren, thus Mang Bert wanted to possess a purpose driven life. He says " We don't just live to work or we don't just work to live – life should have a purpose to make it worthwhile. Knowing your purpose in life is a continuous quest. What's important is, you can add value to your work, to your family and to other people's lives, maintaining and enriching his life physically, emotionally, socially and spiritually".



He's maybe on top of his mountainous successes yet Mang Bert persists on striving for the best in upholding his present status. Lastly, he stressed "I would want to see myself contributing further in

promoting and advocating agricultural technology for a progressive countryside development" and fondly expressed his unending gratitude to the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program, for the land awarded to him, is the most precious possession his family holds, not only yesterday, today but for the rest of their lives, of their children and children's children.