

EXTENSION DIVISION HOLDS NATIONAL CONFERENCE



Adm. Regina Bautista-Martin (centre) obliges for a photo op along with SRA's Extension personnel from Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

The National Conference of SRA's Extension Division was held at the Balay Indang Resort in Cavite on October 8-10, 2013. An ambitious project, the affair was a rare gathering of Extension personnel from Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. No less than Adm. Regina Bautista-Martin was the special guest. Other agency bigwigs in attendance were Mr. Dominador Villanueva, SRA Bacolod Assistant Administrator and Atty. Johanna Jadoc.

Mr. Fernando Corpuz, RDE Manager III formally started the ball rolling by rendering the welcome remarks, stressing the importance of such undertaking. He also made the introduction of the participants and invited guests.

In her key message, Adm. Martin stressed that it is imperative that before the start of the Crop Year, everyone should be in the same page. She viewed the affair as strategic planning and re-tooling rolled into one. She asked for the participants' expectations of the two-day seminar. She echoed questions to ponder like: "What is my commitment?" and "What am I willing to give?"

It is important to know the history of the agency for everybody to move on altogether: from Philsutech to Philsugen to SRA. As compared to other agencies, SRA has a road map and

direction. It's essential for the body to know where they are in their SRA existence---where they came from and where they're headed.

The gracious lady administrator reminded the attendees that they each belong to a particular mill district. With this, she encouraged everyone to bring with them the profile of the district they're representing. By virtue, they serve as communicator, facilitator, front-liner and implementer: that's their basic role being in Extension. They are the hub. It is imperative for them to know their worth/role in the road map of the sugar industry.



As a parting shot, Adm. Martin said that if RDE will not do something creative, SRA will just end up regulating imported sugar. The group should be able to think beyond the box, so to speak. Over the years, sugarcane will continue to be planted (plantation-size). So it will take a lot of creativity and initiative to still come up with a good output amidst challenges.

Next to take the floor was Mr. Butch Alisla, Executive Assistant V, who gave a brief update on the current situation of the sugarcane industry, giving emphasis on the effects of AFTA. Board Member Pablito Sandoval followed suit and talked about the importance of Research and Development in Sugarcane Production by highlighting the case of Mitpol, one of Thailand's largest sugarcane producers involved in R & D. He cited the fact that originally, the Philippines is way ahead of Thailand when it comes to sugarcane production but now, it has overtaken the former.

The afternoon session witnessed the presentation of Mr. Corpuz on SRA's Interim Performance Scorecard (for 2013-2014) under the GCG which helped clear some questions clouding the minds of the audience regarding said subject. Meanwhile, Ms. Rosemarie Gumera, Manager III, PPD presented the status of the block farm convergence program which was well-received by the participants since a substantial open forum followed where the former answered interesting queries. Capping the day's activity was the presentation of each mill district on the present status, developments and updates of their respective block farm project.

The following day began with the continuation of the remaining mill districts' presentation regarding their block farm activities. After which, a representative from the Advanced Science and Technology Institute (ASTI), a research and development arm focused on ICT and microelectronics based products and services of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) took the floor. Mr. Harold Bryan Paler presented their product which caters to the installation of Automatic Weather Stations (AWS) which is important in the Crop Estimation system.

In the afternoon, Dr. Dina Padilla-Fernandez, Chief Agriculturist (L & M) spearheaded the workshop on the mill districts' reporting system, particularly the numerous forms they ought to turn over to SRA. The participants were divided into groups where they were made to discuss

among themselves what submission frequency they thought suits them best. Towards the end of the workshop, everybody agreed to have a uniform submission format.



Capping the day's events was a training workshop aimed to tap the leadership potential of the participants. The invited facilitator was Dr. Divina Edralin, a Full Professor and current Vice Dean for Research and Graduate Studies of the Ramon V. del Rosario College of Business of the De La Salle University.

Her presentation was not only informative and persuasive but light and entertaining as well. The attendees learned while laughing as various film clips were used as motivation scheme. There were various group dynamics which everyone enjoyed doing. In the evening, a fellowship was held to the delight of everyone. It was truly a fitting and relaxing finale for the body before they went back to their respective offices the next day.