

Tarlac and Cagayan Farmer Leaders in OPSI Scene

THE Sugar Regulatory Administration staged two successful OPSI seminars on sugarcane growing with farmer leaders as participants in Tarlac and Cagayan, respectively. The first one was held in Brgy. Apulid, Paniqui, Tarlac (North Cluster) on December 3-4, 2012 while the next stop was at the Carsumco Conference Hall in Sto. Domingo, Piat Cagayan on December 11-13, 2012 with representatives from coops and mill inspectors.

Both events signaled the grand comeback of Board Member Pablito Sandoval to the area of OPSI, where he was very active when it was on its initial stage. In spite of his hectic schedule, he made it a point to attend the said OPSI's and even obliged to lecture on soil agronomy. The attendees truly learned a lot from his talk, since Ka Lito is a veteran and expert farmer himself.



In both trainings, Mr. Sandoval echoed his challenge to the participants: they have to obtain or produce 80 tons per hectare or else, quit sugarcane farming. He cited hard work, discipline and proper practices as salient factors to achieve this goal. He shared his farming experiences over the years and how he does things in his Batangas farm where he yields at least 170 tons of cane.

According to the Board Member, proper farm management is the key tool to his success: from land preparation, early crop establishment, use of HYV's and timing of fertilization, to pest control, use of big tractors, proper harvesting and ratoon management. These, combined with human manpower (which he thinks is still better than mechanized equipment) can really propel a farmer's yield to a high.

Part of the Extension team who handled the seminars and acted as resource speakers for the various topics lined-up were: Mr. Ferdie Corpuz (Manager III, RDE), Chief Agriculturist Dr. Dina Padilla-Fernandez, Supervising Agriculturist Mr. Maximo Pelle, MDO's Mr. Adel Catuira and Joel Ronario, Senior Science Research Specialist Ms. Evelyn Estanislao and Mr. Zyrrus Montiel and Laverne Olalia (Agriculturist II).

