



BRIA organised FARMERS Day cum Harvest Festival in the municipalities of Hinunangan, Hinundayan and Silago, Region 8, the Philippines. Funded through the support of the BRIA local subsidy (LS), the FARMERS Day was the last BRIA activity to be implemented after almost two years of LS support. The LS, as per contract, officially ended in September 2017, a month shy from the BRIA Regional Closing Event. The LS is one of the enabling factors for the smooth implementation of BRIA-related activities in these municipalities as it funds the salaries of the local BRIA coordinators who ensure that BRIA-related activities are in place, including various BRIA-extension activities. It is also worth mentioning that all BRIA activities in the municipalities, like the FARMERS Day, despite having funding support, have invaluable in-kind contributions from the municipalities such as time allocation for planning and farmer invitation, venue preparations, agricultural tools and door prizes for the participating farmers.

FARMERS Day continued to reach more farmers through (1) dissemination of key BRIA modules, with the help of trained agricultural extension workers and lead farmer technicians, relevant to the prevailing needs of the farmers, (2) showcasing best results of the demonstration plots implemented by this season's demonstration plot cooperators and (3) providing a venue for farmers to have the opportunity to ask key technical experts about farming related queries.

The event was held in sequence among the three municipalities so it gave key BRIA public-private partners the opportunity to participate in all the three activities, namely on 18 September in Hinunangan, 25 September in Hinundayan, and 29 September in Silago.

Farmer Participation

With all three municipalities combined, BRIA was able to reach the following 247 new farmers in Region 8:

Municipalities	Male	Female	Total
Silago	27	33	60
Hinunangan	47	90	137
Hinundayan	29	21	50
Grand Total			247

In Silago, the sound system used throughout the activity was connected to the barangay's public announcement system linking its sub-barangay districts.



BRIA Module Presentation

All three municipalities chose Product Stewardship Module as a topic presentation since municipal extensionists have noticed a lot of farmers still do not use personal protective equipment to protect their health and to handle chemical products safely and responsibly.

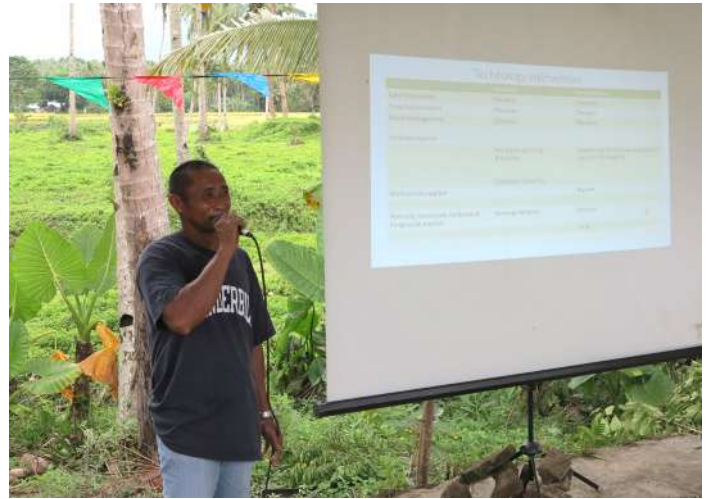
In Hinunangan, a significant number of farmers have voiced out the importance of having a good waste facility where farmers could safely dispose of their empty containers. Mr. Marlou Pan, municipal extensionist, reported that the municipality is planning to come up with a social marketing campaign with chemical companies offering the possibility for farmers to get a minimal incentive when they properly return empty containers. In the meantime, he urged farmers to make do with the material recovery facility and to further encourage other farmers to become responsible users. Hinundayan and Silago, meanwhile, will encourage barangay leaders to strengthen the enforcement of their material recovery facility where containers for special wastes are in place.



Open Forum

One common question that was raised by farmers in all three municipalities is the right fertiliser amount and application timing. Mr. Dalmacio Pajanustan, BRIA Focal Person from the Agricultural Training Institute of Region 8, emphasised the importance of accurate area measurement. He then pushed farmers and lead farmer technicians and extensionists who were trained by BRIA to assist farmers in learning how to measure their farms properly. For him, a lot of farmers are unaware of the risk of applying too much fertiliser because of the lack of proper measurement, not to mention the unnecessary expense. He highlighted that it is the aim of BRIA to educate farmers so that they will have higher yield which would mean higher income while reducing the costs.

In Silago, Mr. Junie Elmido, municipal agricultural officer, explained to farmers how they would benefit from BRIA. He clarified that this project is a collaboration between the private and public sectors aimed at providing a technology that when learned and applied will help increase farmer income. He encouraged farmers to continue seeking guidance from their office especially that despite BRIA project's closure, the municipality, through his office, will continue to include the BRIA modules in their extension system. He also announced the municipality's plan to award farmers who will be able to hit the provincial yield target. He believes that being educated by BRIA is an advantage.



Presentation of Demonstration Plot Results

All three municipalities each had for this cropping season 10 demonstration plots where the best demonstration plot cooperators were given the opportunity to showcase their results. Out of the 30 demonstration plots for this year's cropping season, 28 or 93.3% were able to hit the mark which is 20 percent higher than the average provincial yield. The average provincial yield according to the Department of Agriculture data is 4.24 mt/ha, hence, the participating demo plot cooperator should be able to hit 5.08 mt/ha. Ms. Emelda Omang of Hinunangan, Mr. Albino M. Lagumbay of Hinundayan and Mr. Jelson Aling of Silago were the highest yielders.

Meanwhile, the municipal extensionists encouraged farmers to be open and take the opportunity to ask these demonstration plot cooperators about their experience, so that they would be able to follow the showcased technology package.

Closing Messages



Dr. Vilma M. Patindol, Agricultural Training Institute Centre Director, congratulated the farmers of Hinunangan for showcasing their rice-based products and encouraged both the municipal trade office and agricultural office to work closely so that rice farmers will be able to match the demand of the market.



Meanwhile, Hon. Maximo Locop, Jr., from Silago Municipal Council and Chair of the Committee on Agriculture, extended its gratitude to BRIA as the project brought awareness of and knowledge on good rice farming techniques. He also mentioned that for the coming year, a big chunk of the municipality's budget will be allocated to the agricultural sector.



Lastly, in Hinundayan, Mr. Dalmacio Pajanustan congratulated the municipality for bagging P1 Million Pesos (Sixteen Thousand Euro) as the 2016 rice achievers awardee. He encouraged farmers to avail themselves of the fertiliser loan subsidy programme for which not only will they be able to have the subsidy support but also the right guidance from the municipal extensionists.

Moreover, Mr. Cristiano Bual, Hinundayan extensionist, invited farmers to attend the Farmer Field Classes for the next cropping season starting in October. He noted that learning is a continuous process and that farmers need to invest in attending such field classes if they wish to be able to effectively apply good rice farming techniques in their fields which would mean better yield, lower costs and higher income.

