



Message from the Administrator

My warmest welcome and most heartfelt congratulations to all on the occasion of SRA's 25th year of founding anniversary.

It is indeed fortunate of me to be at the pedestal of SRA at a time when our sugar producers are still enjoying a record sugar bonanza since the dark days of the sugar industry. I am not taking the credit for SRA alone, but give it back to the rest of the stakeholders and our enduring partners, who have so hardly persevered to give new breath of life to once was dubbed a sunset industry.

Looking back through the years, one has hardly noticed that SRA has outgrown its humble beginnings in 1986. SRA is a living witness to how the sugar industry traversed the rocky road toward self-sufficiency and efficiency. Prior to the years when the country was a net sugar importer, what was only dreamed of was to achieve self-sufficiency. The major catalyst that turned the industry around is the grant of the Sugar Agricultural Competitiveness Enhancement Fund to the Mill District Development Councils, thereby transforming them to vibrant and dynamic engines of industry growth in the district level. No one really expected that for CY 2003-2004, the industry would overshoot the critical mass or the desired volume of production where SRA could effectively equilibrate demand and supply, as mandated.

With the problem of excess sugar supply, SRA did not take a backseat nor it stood too complacent to address the consequences. In 2004, industry leaders came united in support of the bioethanol program initiated by SRA. From its monolithic frame, the sugar industry has gradually transformed to a multiple product industry that offers our producers a menu of cane-based products: sugar, ethanol and energy to choose from. After all, this is what free enterprise in the industry is all about.

Resiliency is the trademark of the industry, sustainability is our battlecry. I challenge the industry to face the more difficult task ahead where import tariff by 2015 will be down to 0-5%. Let us focus on 2050, the next 25 years; more productive, efficient, diversified industry, successfully involving all sectors of our society in reaping a major engine of growth!