

## **DA boost promoting organic agriculture in Central Luzon**

The Philippine Organic Agriculture Act of 2010 or RA 10068 generally aims to promote organic farming in the country. Organic Agriculture is a production system wherein it sustains the health of the soil, ecosystem, and even people. It avoids the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides that can cause risks to both the environment and human health. Organic Agriculture also combines tradition, innovation, and science to produce good quality and safe foods for the Filipinos.

With this, the Department of Agriculture (DA) together with the National Organic Agriculture Board (NOAB) intensifies promoting organic farming by reaching different stakeholders of the organic industry, relevant national government agencies, non-government organizations, civil society, and people's organizations.

Dr. Irene M. Adion, Organic Agriculture Program Regional Focal Person of DA-RFO 3 stressed her gratitude for patronizing the organic agriculture program in Central Luzon.

"Ang activity pong ito ay naglalayong i-promote ang organic agriculture as a production system, as technology and also as a source of livelihood for our farmers and non-farmers. Kaya ang konsepto po naten ngayon na gustong ipakita ay urban gardening, sa isang maliit na area pero mapapagtamnan ng masustansya at safe na pagkain." Adion said.

She also encourages other farmers to visit other farms practicing organic farming for them to see the importance and benefits they can get to it.

One of these farmers is Mr. Eligio Vera Cruz, owner of Nathaniel Integrated Farm from Aliga, Nueva Ecija. Being an Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) for almost 38 years, Vera Cruz decided to come home to the Philippines and started his farming career. As a nurse, he managed himself to be more conscious with every food he eats and that is the reason why he practiced organic farming.

"Dahil ako po ay naging health-conscious, ninais kong lahat ng aking kakainin ay magmumula dito sa aking farm. Kung kaya naman tinalaga ko ang aking sarili sa paggamit ng natural farming" Vera Cruz uttered.

Vera Cruz also stated his gratefulness towards DA-RFO 3, "lubos po akong nagpapasalamat sa kagawaran dahil sa walang sawang suporta at tulong na ibinibigay nila sa akin. Malaking tulong po ang mga seminars na inyong ipinagkakaloob na siyang nagagamit ko upang mas mapaigi ang pagtanim ko sa aking farm".

Moreover, in Central Luzon, there are 39,466.81 hectares devoted to organic agriculture in the whole region with 7,586 practitioners. All local government units continue their efforts in promoting OA technologies to increase the production area and practitioners to attain the vision of the region to be known as the "Organic Agriculture Capital of the Philippines".

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