

## **NTA starts beef cattle dispersal**

The National Tobacco Administration has started the dispersal of beef cattle to qualified tobacco growers under its Beef Cattle Production Assistance Project (BCPAP).

There were already 85 heads distributed this week -- 35 in Abra, and 25 each in Ilocos Sur (1st District) and Pangasinan (including Tarlac).

The dispersal of ready-to-breed upgraded Brahman heifers is part of the livestock component of the agency's five-year industry development plan, or the Sustainable Tobacco Enhancement Program (STEP), to increase productivity and farmers' income. For the initial implementation of the project, NTA is set to distribute 250 beef cattle to selected farmer-cooperators under its Tobacco Contract Growing System (TCGS) project.

The Branch Managers and senior staff spearheaded the dispersal in their respective areas, assisted by Project Consultant Dr. Mikael Benedict Carmelo G. Crisologo in the first three locations. Crisologo said that NTA is also expected to deliver beef cattle in Ilocos Norte, 2nd District of Ilocos Sur, La Union, Cagayan and Isabela.

Before the distribution, the Branch Offices conducted beef cattle production training to project implementers and the farmer beneficiaries.

During the training in the Central Office early this month, NTA Administrator Robert Victor G. Seares Jr. said that BCPAP will help jumpstart the beef cattle industry in the tobacco growing provinces and will also forward the vision of the Department of Agriculture for advancing food sufficiency in the country.