

Passing on the Gift - A Dairy Goat Project Partnership of the National Dairy Authority, Heifer International and Rural Development Institute of Leyte

(with data from Hercules Paradiang and Rico Locaba of Heifer International)

Fifty four (54) farm families who are members of the Ormoc Dairy Goat Raisers Association received one hundred ninety-one (191) dairy goat does and eight bucks last September 4, 2013. The project called "Passing on the Gift" is a collaborative effort of the NDA, Heifer International and the Rural Development Institute of Leyte.

(pictures here)

The Dairy Project partnership entails the NDA providing the dairy goats, while Heifer in collaboration with its implementing partner - RDI chooses the qualified beneficiaries, and provides funding support to the operations of RDI. Mr. Hercules Paradiang, Country director of HI, elaborated that the RDI hires the community facilitators who are in-charge of organizing/mobilizing the farmers into Self-Help Groups (SHGs), farmers' associations or cooperatives including fund capacity building trainings for SHG members, Community Animal Health Workers, Lakbay-aral or study tours, and other technical trainings. RDI was also tasked to provide motorcycles to CFs; provide multi-cab for the start-up milk collection, provide milk cans, etc. and assist groups in availing of grants and loans to fund further the expansion and development of the dairy enterprise.

The NDA will further provide AI and dairying-related technical trainings, and dairy goats; and free lease of the 10 hectare NDA property in San Vicente to be developed into a forage nursery area and a training center for dairy farmers. Farmers were chosen according to the following criteria:

- Willingness and ability to care for the animals
- Provision of appropriately designed goat shed
- Access to land for animal raising and forage development
- Willingness to raise and breed the animals and pass on the resulting offspring or at least the same number of animals of same or of better qualities, that they have received to other families in need,.
- Availability of potable water. Water quality is very important in dairying as the quality of water will have direct effect on the quality of milk not just for animal drinking but also in cleaning the udder, utensils, etc related to the milk production, handling and so on
- The willingness to participate in all project activities including regular meetings, having their own family savings and abide by the project policies. The policy will be made in part by these farmers themselves through a participatory process. Heifer, NDA and RDI-Leyte will guide them in making the project policy.

According to Mr. Rico Locaba, HI Regional Program Manager - Central Philippines, the project aims for sustainable economic development and a healthy life for smallholder farmers in Ormoc, Leyte through the strong social capital, mainstreamed gender equity and established market linkages.

The project intends for the smallhold farmers to develop efficient and environment friendly dairy production management practices, increased income by 175% from sales of milk, animal offspring and dividends from cooperative enterprises and, project beneficiary families have improved nutrition status.

The repayment scheme for this project requires that for every goat received, one goat will be passed on to the next family. Thus, if a family receives four goats, then four goats of the same age/value and genetic type is to be passed on to the first pass-on family. This first pass on family will pass-on another four to another family for the 2nd pass-on and the 2nd pass-on will pass on another four to the 3rd pass-on and so on.

Therefore, for a 4 year project with one original and two pass-ons, the original 400 families will receive 1,600 goats, these 400 families will organize another 400 families who will then receive 1,600 offspring grown to the same size/value and breed of goats the original families received; and these 400 pass-on families will organize the last 400 families who will then receive 1,600 offspring of goats.

It is projected that the original 400 will multiply to 1,200 families by end of a 4-year project implementation and a total of 4,800 goats by end of a 4-year project. There will be 400 original farmer recipients organized to receive the 1,600 goats (800 until December and another 800 in the first quarter of 2014).

The dairy goat project was formally launched On September 12, 2013 in Bgy San Vicente in Ormoc City. NDA Administrator Grace J. Cenas and HI Country Director Hercules Paradiang as well as Ms. Josefa Pizon, Executive Director of the Leyte RDI attended the launching ceremonies, which included the initial passing of the gift (dairy goat) and the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement between NDA, Heifer International and the RDI.