

## A Big Step for a Neophyte DMF partner

It took two (2) years for Ms. Annabel F. Jugador of Batingtingan, Manolo Fortich, Bukidnon to develop her forage area before she finally joined dairy farming.

Annabel started developing a portion of her 30-hectare farm into a forage area where she planted signal grass, sitaria, and star grass. Her neighbors were wondering why on earth she is planting too big an area for “weeds”. Not knowing of her plan to raise dairy cattle, their questions were only answered after having seen her unloading her first 33 pregnant dairy animals on June 17, 2011 when she became NDA’s Dairy Multiplier Farm (DMF) partner.

“Raising dairy animals requires more serious attention”, revealed Annabel as she compared this against raising cattle for fattening which she had grown up with as the primary family business. Ever since Annabel started dairy, she has been in the farm, day in and day out; just to watch every single detail of her animals. She knows them by their colors, their condition and even by their behavior. One dam she labeled as the leader; another naughty; and one, a winner. The winner always is the first to know if food supplements like molasses and concentrates are available. These observations make her more attached to her herd which she takes care like a doting mother.



She allows her herd to graze on paddocks which she carefully assigned and moved every 2-3 days, using an electric fence and making sure that each assigned paddock has enough shade for the animals to cover during noontime or whenever the weather is hot. Her prepared forage area is more than enough to feed her animals.

Five months after the pregnant heifers arrived, they started calving. This made Annabel more busy, tending to her new calves and the cows. The newly built milking parlor equipped with two double bucket milking machines and two chilling tanks, each having a capacity of 200-300 liters, were also well prepared for the coming of the young herd. As can be expected of a well-fed herd, Annabel's cows produced an average of 15.40 liters of milk per cow per day. She delivers her milk to the Northern Mindanao Federation of Dairy Cooperatives (NMFDC) milk processing plant in El Salvador City where she has contributed 22% of the total milk volume that the NMFDC plant processed.

Annabel is very keen in cleanliness. She follows all the recommendations the NDA sets to ensure quality milk. The milking parlor is maintained clean and in order. Cows are assigned with individually sanitized towels to clean the teats prior to milking. When one enters her farm, one can only smell fresh grasses, milk and a whiff of sweetness from her stock of molasses. She employs 13 cowboys who assist her in the farm operations. She also accepts dairy trainees who seek experience for employment in dairy farms.

Only six months from starting his dairy operations, words have spread of her great dedication to her marvelous dairy stocks. Her farm became a model for upcoming, new, and even veteran dairy farmers. All who visited her farm could only stand in admiration for the great job she had started. Her constant interaction and insights are learned from more experienced dairy farmers, from attendance in dairy trainings coupled with proper planning and foresight and strict dairy management which are essential ingredients in the success of a newly started dairy enterprise. This quiet but perceptive dairy farmer couldn't keep her works in hiding because her labor of dedication and love of farm life, speaks it all.