

15th Dairy Congress and Expo "Gatas Pinoy: Paunlarin, Tangkilikin, Palaganapin!"

The 15th Dairy Congress was held at Hotel Supreme Convention Plaza, Baguio City on May 16-18, 2012. This important occasion is the annual gathering of various dairy stakeholders to share knowledge and ideas on dairying, drum up support and consolidate efforts to accelerate the development of the local dairy industry. This event was made possible with the valuable support and cooperation of the Dairy Confederation of the Philippines, National Dairy Authority, Philippine Carabao Center, Livestock Development Council, Bureau of Animal Industry and many others.

The Event started with a ribbon cutting ceremony and the opening of the exhibits that showcased different dairy related technologies, products and programs. It was followed by inspiring messages from dignitaries such as the Honorable Ambassador Designate for New Zealand Reuben Levermore, Agricultural Counselor for USDA-FAS Mr. Philip Shull, Department of Agriculture Assistant Secretary for Livestock Dr. Davinio P. Catbagan, Batangas Congressman Mark L. Mendoza, Former Congressman of Pangasinan and Congress Director Mark O. Conjuangco, and Mr. Danilo V. Fausto the National Chairman of the Dairy Confederation of the Philippines.

NDA Administrator Grace J. Cenas presented the Dairy Road Map 2011-2016 which aims to increase the local dairy herd to 55,000, to supply 50% of the fresh milk market, generate 22,000 employment opportunities and to set up a milk trust fund to milk feed one million schoolchildren. She reiterated the noble aims of the NDA to achieve these targets thru the following programs:

1. Herd Build Up
2. Dairy Business Enhancement
3. Milk Quality Assurance
4. Milk Feeding Program

The General Assembly of the Dairy Confederation of the Philippines created a venue where many ideas were conceived on how to further develop the dairy industry. The most innovative idea is to use the tariffs on imported milk products to subsidize the local milk production and to develop the local dairy industry. Other ideas were to create a dairy genetics board and use media and political personalities to promote fresh milk.

Part of the 15th Dairy Congress was the celebration of the NDA Night, the highlight of the night was the awarding of Ms. Gemma Chavez, member of the Palcon Dairy Farmers Cooperative as the Most Outstanding Dairy Farmer for her exceptional dairy farm in Sariaya Quezon. The other nominees were Ms. Amejara Cortez of Island Garden City of Samal and Ms. Minnie Yuviengco of Maria Cristina Farms. The Palcon Dairy Cooperative was also recognized as the lone nominee for the Most Outstanding Dairy Cooperative. NDA Administrator Grace J. Cenas also gave certificates of appreciation to NDA employees who made NDA's 17 anniversary extraordinarily successful and plaques of recognition were also given to Land O'Lakes Foundation Philippines, Inc.

The Dairy Congress' technical sessions presented a wide range of topics on dairy where participants had the opportunity to learn as well as exchange ideas and actual experiences on good dairy practices. The fora touched topics ranging from genetic improvement, advances in artificial insemination and embryo transfer, improving milking routine, milk quality standards and collection system, mineral and mineral supplements, grasses and legumes, feeding techniques and methodologies, profitability for goat farms among many others.

The third day of the event was hosted by former Congressman Mark O. Cojuangco at the 5th district of Pangasinan Dairy Multi-Purpose Coop Farm in the Municipality of Laoac, Pangasinan. The field visit provided the participants the chance to witness actual demonstration of dairy farm operations and Silage Making, which ensures a year round steady supply of nutritious fodder for the dairy cattle. The strategies on developing Pangasinan into a Dairy Zone were also discussed.