

## 17<sup>th</sup> National Dairy Congress, A Success!



The recently concluded 17<sup>th</sup> National Dairy Congress in Magandang GenSan, last May 7-9, 2014 was a huge success gauging from the profile of attendees. The growing number of stakeholders and increasing interest of investors and sponsors attest to the viability of the local dairy industry.

Some 800 participants comprising of dairy stakeholders, business entrepreneurs and the local government units made up of provincial veterinarians, agriculturists, animal nutritionists and feed and plastic manufacturers for milk bottles and for silage.

The Congress opened with a tour of the exhibits of the dairy players and processors in tandem with feed manufacturers and the local government units.



The bustling City of General Santos was the site of this year's congress with the theme: **"Gatas Pinoy: Paunlarin, Tangkilikin, Palaganapin."**

True to form, a lot of dairy farmers all over the country attended the 3-day conference. There was an abundance of fresh milk and chocolate drinks produced by the dairy farmers of Malungon, in Surallah South Cotabato. The support from the local government was likewise generous.

GenSan sans Tuna will not be GenSan, therefore, Tuna was the main event in the meals of every participant.

Senator Cynthia Villar, Chairman of the Committee on Agriculture and Food, Senate of the Philippines, Congressman Leandro Mendoza, 4<sup>th</sup> District of Batangas Representative & Committee on Food and Agriculture and Food Chairman, House of Representatives, DA Secretary Proceso Alcala, Mr. William Verzani, Agricultural Attaché, Foreign Agricultural Services, Embassy of the United States, Manila, and his Excellency Rueben Levermore, Ambassador, New Zealand Embassy, Manila graced the occasion. Mayor Ronel C. Rivera, Regional Director of DA-RFU-XII, Ms. Amalia Jayag-Datukan and Gov. Steve Chiongbian Solon of the Province of Sarangani, welcomed the delegates with their cry: **"Magandang GenSan!"**



An impressive list of speakers from the US, Thailand, Japan and Israel complemented the local resource persons like the Philippine Carabao Center, Land Bank of the Philippines, DA- CMIARC, DAF- ARMM, Forgems Marketing Company, Agripro Premier Nutrition, Gromax (Vitarich), Macondray Plastics, Pampanga State University and TRIAS-NGO South East Asia Office, University of Southern Mindanao.



Despite the heat brought about by intermittent brownouts, the participants contained themselves in the confines of the venue because of the interesting presentations by the speakers.



The event is a vital opportunity to create effective strategies in modernizing the agricultural sector. To quote the president "DairyConEx can help realize our aspirations for countryside development, adopt effective measures to stimulate the global competitiveness of our products and promote health and nutrition through sustainable technology."



Sen. Cynthia Villar for her part commended the Dairycon for zealously pursuing the annual event, as a venue for our local farmers, the dairy industry and other stakeholders to be updated on the latest innovations and to be able to exchange best practices, as well as relevant information redounding to the benefit of the local dairy farmers, increasing their productivity to help in achieving inclusive growth and revitalize the capability of the dairy farmers.

Cong. Mendoza emphasized on the emerging trends and innovations in the dairy industry as the farmers' contribution to the continuing quest of attaining food security for the Filipino people. He also stress in the advocacy of promoting a competitive and sustainable dairy industry.

Gov. Steve Chiongbian Solon challenged the participants and exhibitors to showcase and learn more about the best production practices and the latest production technologies available.

From the fishing industry, Mayor Rivera, believes that the dairy industry can tremendously contribute to the economic sustainability of GenSan as the Agri-Hub of Asia.



Our very own DA Secretary exhorts the participants in our own native tongue “Ipakita natin sa ating mga kababayan at sa buong mundo ang mga magagandang katangian ng GataS Pinoy- malinis, masustansya at talaga namang world class.”

Ms. Amalia Jayag-Datukan, DA Region 12 Executive Director, encourages all smallholder farmers to be successful dairy entrepreneurs and upgrade local dairy stocks that will eventually provide the cheapest source of dairy stocks in the country. She also said that collaborative efforts should be emulated and highlighted by supporting, developing and disseminating technologies to our stakeholders through value adding and downstream processing of high quality dairy consumer products to generate economic activity. The regional director said that we have to keep track of the latest developments to be at par with our ASEAN counterparts, use the gathering as a platform for meaningful discussions and engage participants in preparation for a dynamic and integrated ASEAN community that we all seek to build by 2015.

