

Braulio E. Dujali Women Farmers qualify to the Gawad Saka National Finals

By: Ronald O. Mena

Gawad Saka Search for Most Outstanding Agri- Achievers is the country's most prestigious award or recognition given to an individual farmer or group of farmers annually by the Department of Agriculture. "Kudos to our Outstanding Farmers who made it to the national finals of Gawad Saka Search for Outstanding Agri- Achievers 2011. These farmers who happen to be women in the person of Kagawad Anna C. Cagulada and Ms. Anna Rose F. Espartero deserve our warmest congratulations for the job well done. We are very proud of you for bringing the name of our beloved municipality to the national scene. You have proven once again that farming is not just for men but for women as well. Your accomplishments in the field of agriculture could give an inspiration to your fellow unsung heroes (the farmers). Your best practices are worthy to be replicated to improve the living condition of our farmers not only in this town, in our province and region but throughout the nation." Mayor Lolita A. Moral states during the Regional Gawad Saka awarding ceremony at the Royal Mandaya Hotel, Davao city on July 22, 2011.



Mayor Lolita A. Moral, Gawad Saka Regional Winners Anna C. Cagulada- Rice Base Integrated Farming System, Anna Rose F. Espartero- Young Farmer, Mr. Nelson C. Baer- Municipal Agriculturist and Mr. Ronald O. Mena- Agricultural Technician/ Gawad Saka Coordinator

Region, Region XI has 5 National Finalists. Two came from our municipality, these are *Ms. Anna C. Cagulada for Outstanding Rice- Base Integrated Farming Category. She is a Barangay Kagawad of Dujali and Ms. Anna Rose F. Espartero is the National Finalist for Young Farmer Category. She is from Purok 2, Dujali. Ms. Espartero is a daughter of Gawad Saka National Winner 2008, Farm Family Category- Mr. Ireneo S. Espartero and Magsasakang Siyentista Wenita F. Espartero.*

"Farming is my way of life, I find pleasure in taking care of the plants and animals in the farm" said Mrs. Cagulada or "Inday Anna" to her friends and relatives who was born on June 14, 1964 in General Santos City, to parents Mr. Agustin E. Carmona and Mrs. Erlinda P. Carmona. Inday Anna completed her elementary education at the Dujali Elementary School, secondary education at Maryknoll High School of Sto. Tomas in 1982 and completed her Bachelor of Science in Commerce major in Accounting at the University of Mindanao, Tagum College on March 1987.

Being a born farmer, she introduced innovations in their five (5) hectares rice farm by integrating other crops like banana and coconut. She also raised livestock and engaged into fishpond operation by culturing tilapia and other freshwater species. She followed the basic principle of maximum utilization of land for production with minimum costs by adopting Integrated and Organic Farming Systems.

She is not just a plain farmer; she is also a dynamic coop leader like her father. She worked in Dujali Free Farmers Cooperative (DUFFAMCO) as Bookkeeper from 1987 to 1997. Then she engaged into local banana trading/ shipping to Manila in 1998 -2002. Upon the retirement of her father as DUFFAMCO Manager, Inday Anna took over the mantle as Manager in 2005-2006. On her desire to focus more on her rice farming and rubber production she went down to less demanding position of Treasurer from 2006 until the time that she is elected as Barangay Kagawad in Poblacion Dujali in 2010.

According to her, "we should always treat farming as a business, there is money in it if we know how to utilize every inch of our space for production and apply the appropriate technology. I am also grateful to the Department of Agriculture and Local Government Unit of Braulio E. Dujali for the support extended to us farmers, especially in enhancing our technical know-how through seminars and demonstrations. Without those support we could not improve our status as farmers."

On the other hand, Anna Rose F. Espartero is a very young lass who is now 17 yrs. old who has just started her college education at the University of Mindanao Tagum College taking up Bachelor of Science in Business Administration. When she was 14 years old her parents gave her more than 1 hectare piece of land to manage while studying in high school as an honor student, active student leader and Dujali 4H Club President.

She used the area to hone her skills in farming by applying what she has learned from her parents. "In farming, I have learned the value and importance of time management because I am obliged to apportion my time in order to cope up with so many activities. I saw to it that I can visit the farm at least three times a week during school days either early in the morning or after classes and one whole day on week end." Anna Rose said when ask on how she accomplished so much being a youth. Her farm demonstrates the typical integrated farming system with area planted to hybrid rice, fishpond seeded with tilapia and pangasius, its dike are planted with mango, coconut and banana. The remaining area is utilized for vegetable garden and livestock raising.

"As a young farmer, my main concern is to achieve sustainable development in the farm. That is why I'm adopting *Nature Farming System* and other environment friendly approaches to help maintaining the ecological balance" Ms. Espartero stated.

Municipal Agriculturist, Mr. Nelson C. Baer whose efforts have paved the way for these farmers to be recognized said that "The program thrusts of Municipal Agriculture Office of the Local Government Unit of Braulio E. Dujali are geared towards empowering the farmers to improve production with lower costs through environment friendly practices that would enable us to attain sustainable agricultural development and food security. In achieving these goals, we need partners who in one way or another can contribute to the upliftment of the quality of life of our farmers. Kagawad Anna Cagulada and Anna Rose Espartero are just few of them who demonstrate that women can also excel in the field of farming like men. Their good practices in integrated farming system that showcase the principle of maximum utilization of land for production and income are worthy to be replicated by other farmers. So, to our Gawad Saka National Finalists keep up the good works. The people of Braulio E. Dujali are hoping that both of you will become the national winner in your respective field specialization."

Mayor Moral attended the Regional Awarding Ceremonies at the Royal Mandaya Hotel, Davao City on July 22, 2011. She assisted NAFC Executive Director Eng'r. Noel A. Juliano, Regional Executive Director, Dr. Oscar O. Parawan, RAFC Chairman, Dr. Rodolfo N. Lopez and other big wigs of the Department of Agriculture Region XI.



Mayor Moral to her right BFAR Regional Director Fatima M. Idris, DA Regional Executive Director, Dr. Oscar O. Parawan, Davao Oriental Governor Corazon N. Malanyaon, Eng'r. Noel A. Juliano, NAFC Executive Director and RAFC Chairman, Dr. Rodolfo N. Lopez