



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST IN THE PHILIPPINES

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DISASTER BULLETIN ALERT

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AEROBIC RICE: BREAKING NEW GROUNDS IN VISAYAS

In Tagadtaran village in Leyte, people were amazed when Rita Lastimado planted rice on a dry, hilly patch of land. She attracted attention because for such a long time villagers here have not seen rice planted on the hill. Used to traditional farming, villagers planted rice on irrigated paddies and they thought what she had done was quite unusual.

“Our neighbors were amazed when we planted rice on a hilly and dry soil. Then when our plant grew, they also wanted to plant and were asking us about the variety we have planted and if there are still seeds available,” said Rita, in a jovial tone. “Of course I will share to them some seeds after the harvest.”

“This is the first time that such rice variety is introduced in this area,” said UCCP project coordinator Napoleon Romero. “Some villagers are quite skeptical about it. Not only in Tagadtaran but also in other rehab areas. But there is openness about the idea. And others would like to try and expect a convincing result.”

Through its community ministries, the UCCP sees the introduction of the aerobic rice technology beyond the economic benefits it will bring to small farmers.

“We are breaking new grounds. We are trying to influence them of a positive culture and an innovative scientific outlook here. We are introducing an eco-friendly farming method, which is not new. Like the idea that organic fertilizer is the most suitable input for aerobic rice and other varieties,” said Rev. Levilou Amora, program coordinator of UCCP in East Visayas.

UCCP continues to hold seminars and trainings on aerobic rice, open-pollinated vegetable seed varieties and organic farming in the conferences in the provinces of Samar and Leyte. To date it has conducted 5 training sessions in Samar and 4 in Leyte, and with other schedules ahead.

Meanwhile, Rita Lastimado looks forward to rice harvest in October. She is not really expecting of a bumper harvest. But knowing that there will be staple food to consume for the coming months, it is quite a good thought that somehow her family can tide over the economic crisis that typhoon Haiyan had wrought on their livelihood.



The uncultivated hilly land of Rita Lastimado before it was planted with aerobic rice



Weeding regularly is an important part of the work to promote the growth of the aerobic rice



Gift of the Land: Aerobic rice begins to germinate and will be ready for harvest after 95 days

UCCP would like to thank the donors from different partner churches for their support including The United Church of Canada, Global Ministries, United Evangelical Mission, Reformed Church in America, Sign of Hope, Presbyterian Church-USA, United Church of Christ in Japan-Hyogo and many individuals whose hearts abound with God's gift of generosity.

SEMINAR AND TRAINING IN HERNANI, SAMAR



SEMINAR AND TRAINING IN MAYDOLONG, EASTERN SAMAR





After clearing, beneficiary Alex Estrella turned what was once a dense area of trees and shrubs on the foothill into a farm planted with aerobic rice. On the lower left photo is the Estrella couple inspecting their plant, on the lower right is Rev. Levilou Amora during an ocular visit in Tagadtaran village.



On top, farmers prepare the land for planting the open-pollinated vegetable varieties. Better land preparation is essential for the proper growth of vegetables. Below, others have already grown and harvested their vegetables.