

— *Opisyal na Pahayagan ng Kawanihan sa Pamantayan ng Agrikultura at Palaisdaan* —

PAMANTAYAN

Isyu 5

Enero-Hunyo 2022



**BAFS awarded certificate to TOFPA-COOP - First
accredited core PGS group in the Philippines**

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PAMANTAYAN

PAMANTAYAN is the official newsletter published by the Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Standards (BAFS). This will be published every semester to highlight the agency's achievements and impact and serve as a platform to provide news to our wide array of stakeholders.

ABOUT THE COVER

The photograph was taken during one pre-inspection of the Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) Organization in (area/location).

Pre-inspection aims to assess the compliance of core PGS farmer members with the applicable Philippine National Standard (PNS) on organic agriculture. Once certified, PGS Core Group is eligible for official accreditation.

PGS is a locally focused quality assurance system that relies on the active participation of stakeholders.

We encourage our readers to photocopy and circulate articles in this newsletter with proper acknowledgment. Everyone is also encouraged to suggest topics or news relevant to standards.

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MESSAGE



VIVENCIO R. MAMARIL, PhD
Director IV

Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries
Standards, Department of Agriculture

Our world did become virtual – seemingly endless online platform meetings to keep people safe and stakeholders served, but still keep the BAFS’ commitment relevant and significant. In fact, goals were achieved with limited spending. Our roles were redefined by this crisis that not everyone can readily adapt to, but the few can and will be poised to succeed in time.

The first semester of CY 2022 was just an overflow of the previous two years of struggles and uncertainties. This time around, muscles built during the pandemic helped us navigate firmly towards a more confident and brighter tomorrow, able and stable.

At a glance, it is safe to say that even if the BAFS may be one of those buffeted by digital disruption, changing stakeholder and employee needs, climate change, globalization, and many more similar challenges, we are moving forward towards building a more robust organization and envision to adapting to new normal.

Adaptability is entirely within the BAFS’ control, and we are determined to provide our stakeholders with the benefits of scale and speed. Astonished and inspired by the new technologies unraveled during the pandemic, we stand on solid ground to act swiftly and bring our expertise vis-à-vis our services to whoever needs it the most.

Recognizing likewise the BAFS employees’ efforts - who knew what needed to be done – quickly and flawlessly executed their tasks to run this organization to a much better state, I salute you all, and thank you!

As we continue to move forward with the newly seated administration of His Excellency President Ferdinand Romualdez Marcos Jr., the BAFS commits to join in its journey to secure the Philippines’ food future and food self-sufficiency mantra. “We do not look back, but ahead,” says President Bongbong Marcos.###

Organic Agriculture Registry System (OARS) Introduced for an Innovative, Simplified and Unified Process and Issuance of Registration

Mark F. Matubang and Anna Dominique V. Cadsawan, Organic Agriculture Division

The registry of certified organic producers, produce, and inputs known as OARS will soon be available for our clientele.

On June 09, 2022, Department of Agriculture (DA) Secretary William D. Dar approved Department Circular (DC) No. 5, Series of 2022 or the *Unified Set of Rules and Regulations for the Registration of Organic Producers, Produce, and Inputs*, which also aims to establish and maintain the OARS for organic producers, produce, and inputs. The new registration guidelines mandate the Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Standards (BAFS), Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI), Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI), and Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) to come up with a single unified set of rules and regulations for organic agriculture registration requirement.

The new Circular re-engineers and removes the application process, which entails costs and time for applicants in applying for registration. This means organic producers, produce, and inputs will be automatically registered after the certification process and enrollment by the BAFS-accredited OCBs to the OARS as an online registry database. The OARS is a web-based database to be deployed on the BAFS Website and will serve as the official registry of

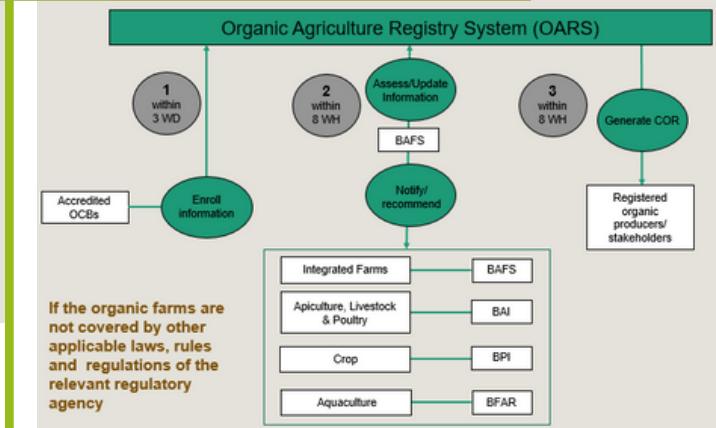
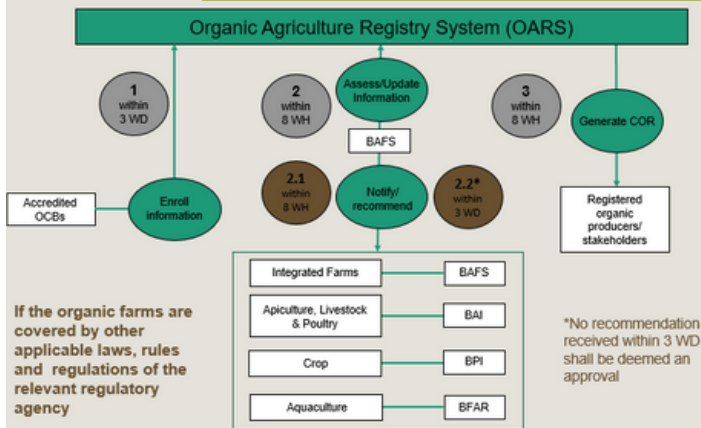


Public Consultative Meeting on Unified Sets of Rules and Regulations for the Registration of Organic Producers, Produces and inputs held on March 31, 2022

organic producers, produce, and inputs in the Philippines that the BAFS-accredited OCBs have certified to comply with the Philippine National Standards (PNS).

This means that information on the total organic agriculture area in hectares of all certified organic farms in the country, organic farm names, addresses, contact details, registry identifications, organic certificate validity, certifier names, type of certification (third-party or PGS), area in hectares of each organic farm, certified organic produce and products, and certification scope is readily available with just a click of a button. With this information, it will now be easy for our organic farmers to qualify as beneficiaries of the National Organic Agriculture Program (NOAP). Likewise, our organic agriculture stakeholders (e.g., consumers, market players, and various agencies), including policymakers, will now have an accessible database for their awareness and reference in determining appropriate interventions and further promoting organic agriculture in the country. ■

Reengineered Process and Issuance of Registration Flow



Collecting baseline data for bottle gourd standard

Vivian E. Timple, Laboratory Services Division

The DA-BAFS conducted field data collection on bottle gourd (*Lagenaria siceraria* (Mol.) Standl.), commonly known as upo, at the Department of Agriculture-Cavite Agricultural Research and Extension Services (DA-CARES) Demo Farm at Brgy. Pantihan 2, Maragondon, Cavite on June 16 and 23, 2022. BAFS gathered information on farm practices and product grading and classification.

DA-CARES practices a biointensive method of crop production involving the cultivation of small areas of land to improve soil productivity through organic inputs. The farm uses vermicast as basal fertilizers and applies their liquid concoctions of Fermented Plant Juice (FPJ), Fermented Fruit Juice (FFJ), and Fish Amino Acid (FAA), Oriental Herbal Nutrient (OHN), Vermitea, and Wood Vinegar. These concoctions, which are applied through soil drenching and foliar spraying, serve as fertilizer and pesticide.

The plot planted with 28 hills of bottle gourd occupying an area of 340 m² is located about the central part of the 15 000 m² organic farm. The plot has yielded fruits with a mean weight of 32 kg and 290 kg for nine weeks² of harvesting as of June 23, 2022. During the data collection, some fruit defects were observed, mainly caused by mechanical damage.

The harvested bottle gourd fruits are sorted based on length: very short, short, medium, and long. Short and medium fruits (averaging 33 and 38 cm in length, respectively) are most preferred by buyers at the local market since they are considered to have the ideal size for one family serving.

The harvested bottle gourd fruits are sorted based on length: very short, short, medium, and long. Short and medium fruits (averaging 33 and 38 cm in length, respectively) are most

preferred by buyers at the local market since they are considered to have the ideal size for one family serving. The bottle gourd is sold for Php 25 to Php 35 per kilogram at the local market.

The collected data and information from this activity will serve as the basis for establishing a standard that will guide bottle gourd growers to ensure the quality and safety of their produce. ■



Bottle gourd (*Lagenaria siceraria* (Mol.) Standl.) fruit ready for harvest. Photo by: Angelo Custodio

BAFS Continues Efforts to Strengthen Technical Capacity on Standards Development

Kriszia Ann U. Decena and Zaireen B. Cleofe, Laboratory Services Division

The Department of Agriculture (DA)'s Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Standards (BAFS) continues its efforts to enhance its strategies to support the development of the Philippine National Standards (PNS) for agri-fishery commodities.

A three-day workshop was held on March 29-31, 2022, via Zoom Cloud Meeting, which discussed how research contributes to standards development and risk analysis in general. Dr. Ma. Concepcion C. Lizada, BAFS' first OIC-Director and a professor emeritus of Food Science at the University of the Philippines Diliman, served as a resource speaker for the webinar. She underlined that standards development is the core function of BAFS and requires a thorough risk analysis. As a preliminary activity, Dr. Lizada suggested that the Laboratory Services Division (LSD) search the literature to collect relevant information for standards development.

Currently, LSD is engaged in developing a risk profile, which provides information on the food safety problem and the context in which it occurs. This helps risk managers make sound management decisions whether or not a risk assessment is needed or other risk management options need to be implemented. In addition, LSD collects commodity information and farm practices to develop technical reports, which serve as the basis for standards development.

The competent authority may use approved PNS as the basis of their technical regulations. This will benefit consumers,



BAFS participants with Dr. Lizada (resource speaker) on the 2nd day of Workshop on Research Planning to develop and plan the operationalization of the Bureau's research strategy to support standards development on March 29-31, 2022 via zoom cloud meeting.

fisherfolks, farmers, traders, and other stakeholders, ensuring that agricultural and fishery products can be safe by adhering to science-based food safety standards. ■

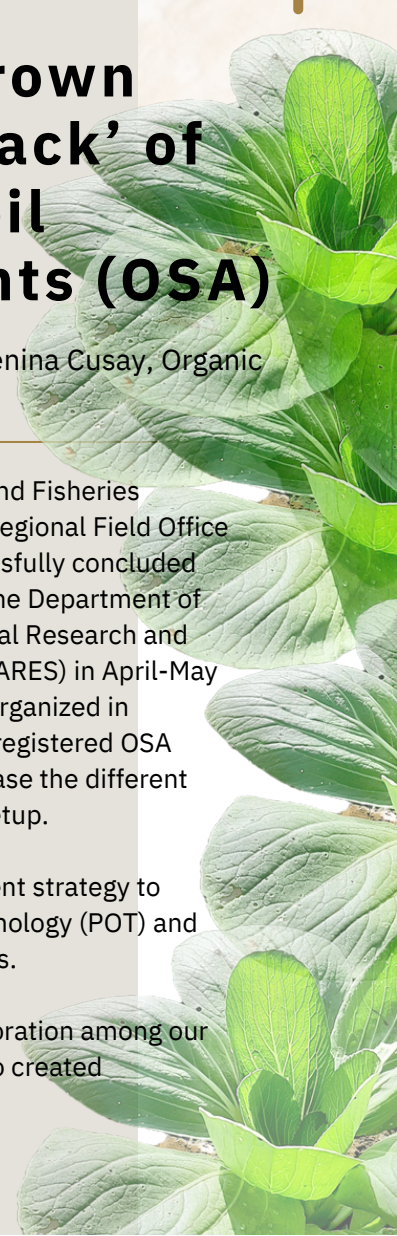
Pakchoi Grown Under a 'Pack' of Organic Soil Amendments (OSA)

Gerald Cammagay and Jenina Cusay, Organic Agriculture Division

The Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Standards (BAFS) and DA-Regional Field Office (RFO) CALABARZON successfully concluded the 1st OSA Derby held at the Department of Agriculture - Lipa Agricultural Research and Experimental Station (DA-LARES) in April-May 2022. The 1st OSA Derby, organized in partnership with the BAFS-registered OSA producers, aimed to showcase the different OSA products under field setup.

The OSA Derby is an excellent strategy to promote a Package of Technology (POT) and use registered OSA products.

Aside from fostering collaboration among our key players, the activity also created opportunities.



The Department of Agriculture and BAFS will exert more effort to further expand this kind of activity in other crops and areas. I hope that this will encourage our registered organic operators to continue our extended partnership in similar activities.

**- Vivencio R. Mamaril,
DA-BAFS Director IV**

We will continue this kind of activity to create awareness for our local farmers that organic practice of fertilization is safe and healthy.

**- Ms. Eda Dimapilis,
DA-RFO CALABARZON Research Division Chief and
Organic Agriculture Program Coordinator**

for knowledge sharing and linking among the OSA producers. Ten BAFS-registered OSA producers participated in the activity, and fifteen (15) OSA products were used to produce the leafy vegetable “Pakchoi.”

In early April, preparatory activities were carried out for land preparation, collection, and mixing of growing media, seed sowing, application of OSA, and transplanting. The growing area was maintained until the scheduled harvest. The first-ever OSA Derby was concluded through the Harvest Festival on May 23, 2022. Senator Cynthia Villar, chair of the Senate Committee on Food Agriculture and Agrarian Reform, and DA Secretary William D. Dar delivered messages of support during the Harvest Festival.

Senator Villar thanked the participants for their active involvement in the project and the promotion of OSA for better crop output.

The promotion of organic agriculture is very important for it will give our farmers and fisherfolks higher income to help reduce poverty in rural sectors and improve the health benefits of their agricultural products. It is timely since the cost of fertilizers is exorbitant.

**- Cynthia A. Villar,
Philippine Senator**

Secretary Dar, in his speech, commended the efforts of BAFS and DA-RFO CALABARZON for this inaugural activity and extended his gratitude, appreciation, and congratulations to the ten certified and registered OSA producers who participated in this 1st OSA Derby.

The OSA Derby showcased the potential of OSA in crop production and contributed to the promotion of organic agriculture as a whole. With 164.85 kilograms of Pakchoi harvested from an approximately 400 sqm area at DA-LARES, the activity is a SUCCESS! The participating BAFS-registered OSA producers supported the forthcoming OSA Derby in other regions for other crops. ■



*Pakchoi (Brassica rapa chinensis) plants.
Photo by: Anna Dominique Cadsawan*

Contributing to professional growth: BAFS hosts webinars with CPD units

Jan Vincent DR. Tecson, Technical Services Division

As part of its work to promote Philippine National Standards (PNS), the Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Standards (BAFS) held webinars from April to June 2022 through its official Facebook page. Half of the webinars offered certificates with Continuing Professional Development (CPD) units.

In 2021, BAFS was accredited as a CPD unit provider for agriculture through Professional Regulation Commission - CPD Accreditation System (PRC-CPDAS). This initiative was done as a contribution to the strengthening of the competence of Filipino agri-professionals as per the Republic Act No. 10912 or the CPD Law.

Starting this year, the Bureau can provide certificates with CPD units to agri-professionals actively participating in the webinars. Kicking off this year's webinar was the *MAISagana at Ligtas na Ani* webinar featuring corn-related Philippine National Standards (PNS), held on April 20-22, 2022. For May, two webinars were conducted – BAFS Webinar on Halal Standards from Feeds to Slaughter on May 5 and Ensuring Food Safety and Quality of Crustaceans: Webinar on Standards Related to Shrimps and Crabs on May 18 to 19. Recently, a webinar on Food Defense in the Agriculture and Fishery Sector was conducted on June 5 in support of World Food Safety Day.

The first two webinars offered CPD units and racked up 3,020 registrations. MAISagana at Ligtas na Ani webinar issued 489 certificates with 8.0 CPD units while the BAFS Halal Webinar released 540 certificates with 2.0 units. These CPD webinars performed better than the other webinars, as seen in Figure 1.

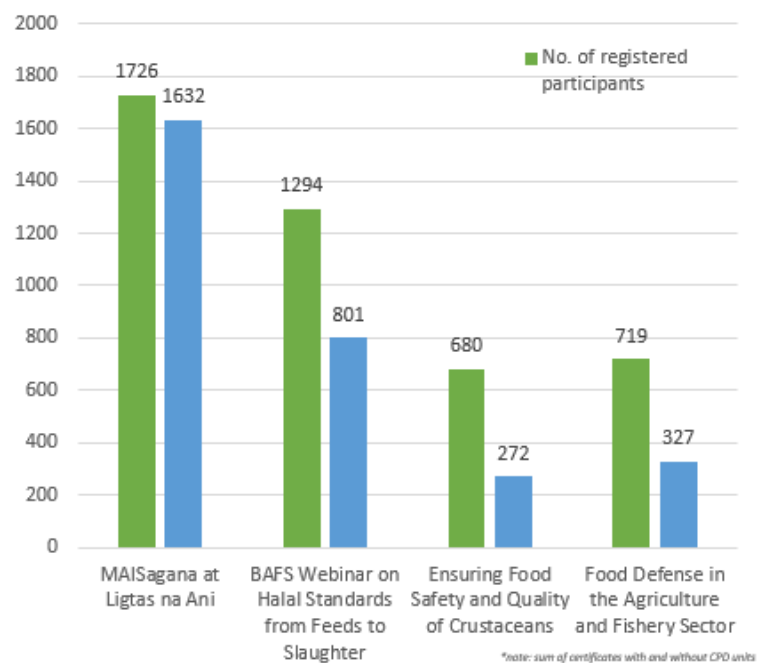


Figure 1. Number of registrations and certificates issued for the 1st semester 2022 BAFS webinars

For the 2nd half of 2022, the Bureau aims to offer more webinars with CPD units. These webinars, which will feature cassava, and livestock-related PNS, are scheduled for live streaming in September and October. BAFS also aims to expand its CPD accreditation to cater to the learning needs of other professions, i.e., fisheries technologists and agricultural and biosystems engineering. As the saying goes, “learning never ends,” and BAFS is more than happy to help you learn more about ensuring the food safety and quality of agriculture and fishery products through standards. See you in our upcoming webinars! ■



Webinars conducted for the 1st semester of 2022.

Photo collage by: Jan Vincent DR. Tecson

BAFS awarded certificate to TOFPA-COOP - first accredited core PGS group in the Philippines

John Lawrence Arrogante, Organic Agriculture Division

The Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Standards (BAFS) awarded the first Certificate of Accreditation and Participatory Organic Certificates to the core members of Tublay Organic Farming Practitioners Agriculture Cooperative (TOFPA-COOP) on May 16, 2022, in Baguio City.

The DA-Cordillera Administrative Region (DA-CAR) and the Agricultural Training Institute - Regional Training Center (ATI-RTC CAR) organized the ceremonial awarding to mark another milestone in the organic agriculture industry.

In a recorded video message, DA Secretary William D. Dar congratulated the first accredited core PGS group and commended their dedication to advocating organic agriculture in the country.

The Office of Senator Cynthia Villar, the National Organic Agriculture Program - National Program Coordinating Office (NOAP-NPCO) led by Dir. Bernadette San Juan, DA-CAR led by Dir. Cameron Odsey and RTD Jennilyn Dawayan, and ATI-RTC CAR led by Dir. Charlie Sagudan witnessed this activity through a blended platform.

Senator Cynthia Villar commended Dir. Mamaril and Dir. San Juan “for [their] hard work to implement their mandates and for their promotion of the Participatory Guarantee System.”



BAFS Director Vivencio R. Mamaril (second from the left), Mr. Ryan U. Palunan (leftmost), ATI RTC Director Charlie Sagudan (rightmost), RED Cameron Odsey (second from the right), and RTD for Research and Regulations Jennilyn Dawayan (third from the right) award the Participatory Organic Certificates and Accreditation Certificate to the core PGS group members based in Tublay, Benguet on May 16, 2022. *Photo by: John Lawrence Arrogante*

On behalf of the LGU-Tublay and the core PGS group members, Municipal Agriculturist Engr. Jeffrey Sotero was grateful for being recognized as the first accredited core PGS group. He added that this historic move entailed “big responsibility” on their part and accepted the challenge to ensure that the group would perform its responsibilities as an accredited OCB.

It is expected that more small farmers and fisherfolk will be encouraged to venture into organic agriculture and get certified through PGS.

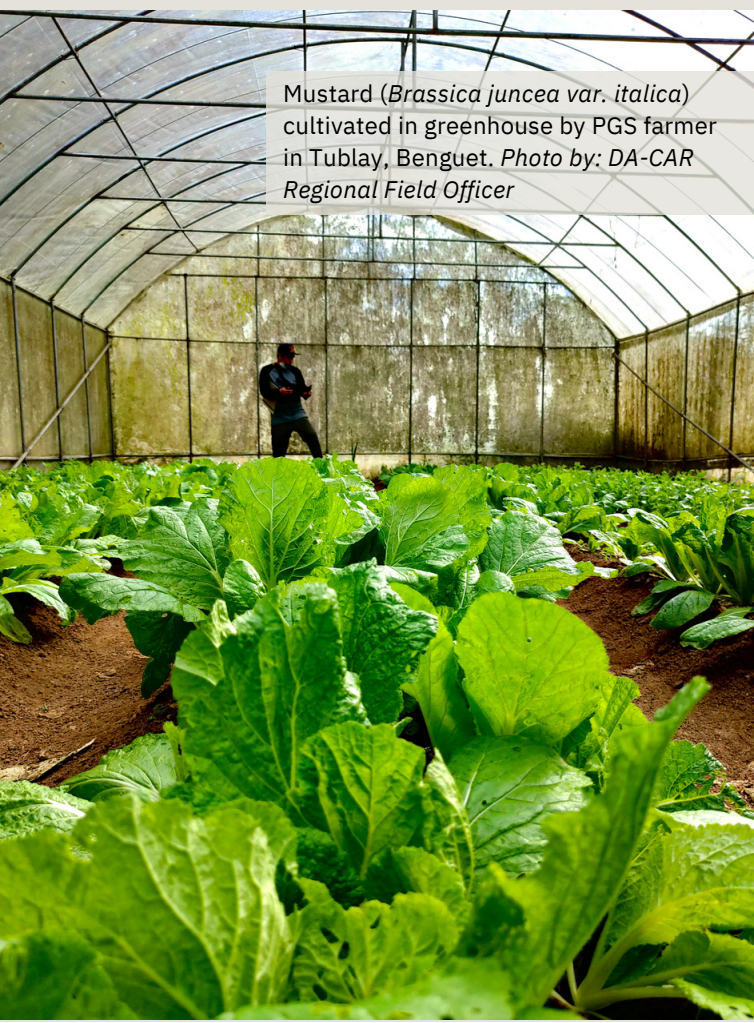
“
As an alternative certification option for small farmers and fisherfolk, this momentous event marks the beginning of the empowerment of small farmers and fisherfolk towards obtaining certification for safer and quality organic produce and products with a premium price—masaganang ani at mataas na kita.
 - William D. Dar,
 DA Secretary
 ”

Tublay PGS group became the first BAFS-accredited organic certifying body (OCB) under the Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) under the Organic Agriculture Act, as amended by the Republic Act 11511.

Accreditation by BAFS attests that the core PGS group has complied with the requirements to operate as an OCB and can now provide certification services to its farmer-members. The BAFS looks forward to accrediting more core PGS groups before this year ends. ■



Broccoli (*Brassica oleracea* var. *italica*) planted by PGS farmer in Tublay, Benguet. Photo by: John Lawrence Arrogante



Mustard (*Brassica juncea* var. *italica*) cultivated in greenhouse by PGS farmer in Tublay, Benguet. Photo by: DA-CAR Regional Field Officer



The BAFS' Organic Agriculture Division - Accreditation Section together with the core PGS group members during the awarding ceremony on May 16, 2022. Photo by: John Lawrence Arrogante

BAFS, DA RFO, ATI-RTC strengthened collaboration for implementing PGS regulations

Jay El E. Bautista and Clarisse Jill R. Guevara,
Organic Agriculture Division

Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Standards (BAFS) teamed up with the Regional Field Offices of the Department of Agriculture (DA-RFOs) and Agricultural Training Institute - Regional Training Centers (ATI-RTCs) for the implementation of regulations relative to the Participatory Guarantee System (PGS). This collaboration aims to provide technical assistance to the core PGS group towards certification and accreditation.



Mr. Vicente D. Limsan, Jr. interviewed one of the core farmer-members during the pre-inspection to Tublay Organic Farming Practitioners Agriculture Cooperative (TOFPA-COOP) in Tublay, Benguet, on February 22-25, 2022. *Photo by: Geeza June Painaga*

PGS is a locally-focused quality assurance initiative that follows the production-to-consumption approach in providing guarantees on the integrity and quality of organic products. Republic Act No. 11511 recognizes PGS as an alternative method for organic certification. As part of this recognition scheme, the BAFS is tasked to accredit core PGS groups as Organic Certifying Body (OCBs).

Pre-inspections are carried out to assess the level of compliance of core PGS groups with the applicable current Philippine National Standards (PNS) and their operations with related regulatory requirements.



BAFS and Agricultural Training Institute Central Office (ATI-CO) during the pre-inspection to core farmer-members of PGS Sto. Niño in Sto. Niño, South Cotabato on March 23-24, 2022.

Photo by: Agricultural Training Institute - Regional Training Center XII

As of writing, the BAFS pre-inspected 11 core PGS groups. In Luzon (Tublay Organic Farming Practitioners Agriculture Cooperative (TOFPA-COOP), PGS Pangasinan Philippines, Inc. (3Ps), Pecuaría Development Cooperative, Inc. (PDCI), Negros Island Organic Producers Association (NIOPA) and Organico Mindoreños - Magsaysay Chapter PGS Group); Visayas (PGS Sto. Niño, Iloilo PGS Group, Aklan Provincial Organic Practitioners Association (APOPA) and ONE Samar Agro-Organic Practitioners Inc. (ONE-SAOP)); and Mindanao (PGS Sto. Niño, San Isidro Parish Binucayan Area Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative (SIPBAFAMCO), and CSU Butuan PGS).

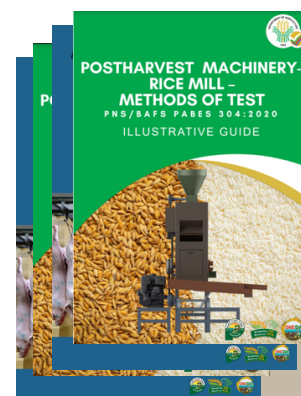
As a result of the pre-inspection activities, two of the core PGS groups pre-inspected, namely TOFPA-COOP and 3Ps, successfully secured their participatory organic certificates (POC) on May 16 and June 24, 2022, respectively. The POCs with a validity of three years allow these farmer-members to label and market their products as 'organic.' Moreover, TOFPA-COOP was recognized as the first accredited core PGS group OCB in the Philippines on May 16, 2022. ■



Mr. Vicente D. Limsan, Jr. led the farm inspection during the pre-inspection to core farmer-members of One Samar Agro-Organic Practitioners Inc. (ONE-SAOP) in Gandara, Samar on June 27 - July 1, 2022 *Photo by: Graciela Gacutan of ATI-RTC Region 8*

BAFS releases 10 knowledge products for the first semester

Darelle Kate Romatico and Aubrey Katreena Ramos,
Technical Services Division



The DA – Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Standards (BAFS), through the Technical Services Division (TSD), continues to develop Knowledge Products (KPs) for the Philippine National Standards (PNS) related to agriculture and fisheries sector. For the first semester of 2022, the Bureau released three Explanatory Manual (EM), two Illustrative Guides (IG), and five Posters.

The KPs aim to harmonize understanding of the provisions by providing additional information in explanatory notes, relevant and supplementary

images, and graphical synthesis. The KP also helps to communicate clearly with the stakeholders concerning the PNS and its applications.

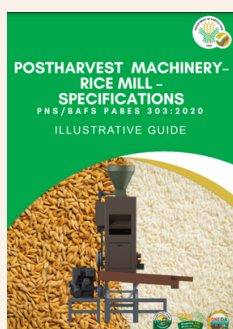
These KPs were developed in collaboration with the Technical Working Group (TWG) of the PNS through a series of meetings and technical reviews.

Copies of the released KPs are available for download at <http://bafs.da.gov.ph>. ■

KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS DEVELOPED

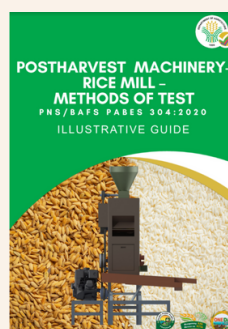
ILLUSTRATIVE GUIDES

A document that provides supplementary photographs or images pertaining to specific provisions of the adopted quality-related PNS.



Postharvest Machinery - Rice Mill - Specifications

An aid for the stakeholders to have uniform understanding of and interpretation of the specifications of rice mill.



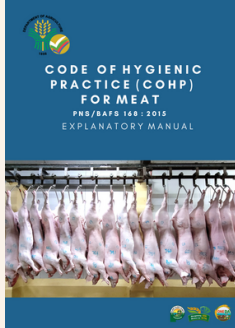
Postharvest Machinery - Rice Mill - Methods of Test

A supplementary material for the standard procedures of sampling agricultural machinery and its components.

EXPLORATORY MANUALS

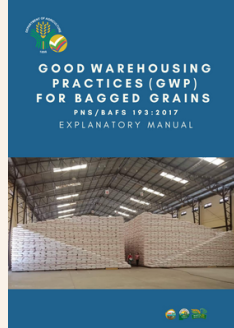
A document that provides additional notes, clarifications, or relevant images usually in the form of a photograph for specific provisions or requirements of an adopted food safety PNS.

Code of Hygienic Practice for Meat



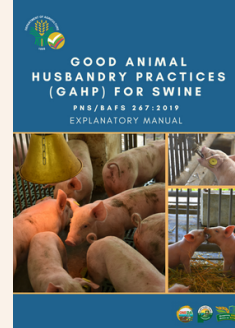
A guide to the standards for the hygienic processing of meat from farm to post-slaughter handling of meat.

Code of Good Warehousing Practices for Bagged Grains



A guide to grain operators/handlers on the appropriate handling, storage, and transport of bagged grains.

Code of Good Animal Husbandry Practices for Swine



A guide to help hog raisers provide safe and quality products to consumers.

POSTERS

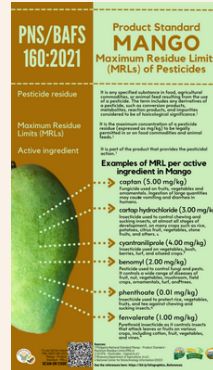
A graphical synthesis that presents the salient features of the adopted PNS which aims to communicate quickly and clearly complex information in visual form.

Fresh Fruits - Calamandin/ Calamansi - Grading and Classification



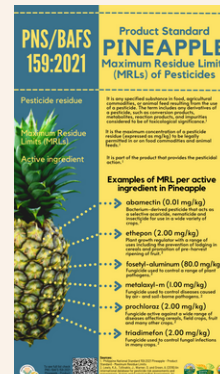
A guide for the grading and classification of calamandin/ calamansi.

Product Standards - Mango Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) of Pesticides



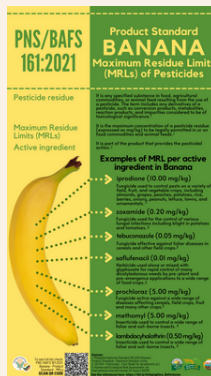
A guide on the Maximum Residue Limit of each active ingredient in Mango.

Product Standards - Pineapple Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) of Pesticides



A guide on the Maximum Residue Limit of each active ingredient in Pineapple.

Product Standards - Banana Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) of Pesticides



A guide on the Maximum Residue Limit of each active ingredient in Banana.

Animal Carcass - Chicken Grading



A guide on the minimum requirements for chicken carcass grading.

BAFS Conducts Orientation on Leave Administration for Permanent Employees

Rosemarie V. Calibo and France Earvynne R. Enriquez, Information Communication Unit

In its pursuit of transparency in providing clarity and setting expectations, the Bureau conducted an orientation seminar on how leave credits are administered specifically for permanent employees. The seminar was held on a Wednesday, the 27th of May 2022, via Zoom with no less than CSC Director Hans R. Alcantara as the Resource Person.



BAFS participants with Mr. Alcanta (resource speaker) during the Orientation on May 27, 2022

As stipulated under Rule XVI of the Omnibus Rules Implementing Book V of Executive Order No. 292 of the Civil Service Commission, *an official or employee of an organization is granted a leave of absence – a right not to report for work with or without pay, as may be provided by law and as the rules prescribed under Rule XVI otherwise known as the Omnibus Rules on Leave.*

In general, appointive officials up to the level of heads of executive departments, directors of departments, undersecretaries, and employees of the government, whether permanent, temporary, or casual, who render work during the prescribed office hours, shall be entitled to *15 days vacation and 15 days sick leave annually*

with full pay exclusive of Saturdays, Sundays, Public Holidays, without limitation as to the number of days of vacation and sick leave that they may accumulate. (Amended by CSC MC Nos. 41, s. 1998 and 14 s. 1999)

Twenty-one employees actively participated during the orientation and made the Q&A portion more engaging with the RP as they exchanged significant viewpoints and clarifications. Director Alcantara emphasized the importance of acting immediately on leave applications within five working days. Otherwise, such an application will automatically be considered approved after five days.

Aside from sick and vacation leave, various types of leave of absence were enumerated, such as force leave (FL=5 days), special privilege leave (SPL=3 days), maternity (120 days) and paternity (7 days), adoption, rehabilitation, and parental leave for solo parents (1 day each).

A leave policy in an organization is significant as it allows employers to retain valuable employees in situations where an employee's only option might be to resign or find alternative employment without an approved leave of absence. Having a leave policy also shows employees they have options when a need for a personal emergency leave arises. Without one, there's much ambiguity. This can cause fear, anxiety, and stress for employees contemplating a leave of absence – all detrimental to employee productivity, engagement, and retention. ■



Shaping the way we communicate

Rosemarie Calibo and Katrina Maminta,
Information Communication Unit and
Technical Services Division

Communication skills, both oral and written, are critical skills needed at all levels in the organization. It is essential, therefore, that organization members possess effective verbal and written communication skills. As a government organization, BAFS is responsible to its stakeholders for delivering accurate, timely, and simple information.

Writing is a more challenging job than getting your message across by talking. When you are writing, you do not have a second chance. For good or bad, the words are down on paper, and you are stuck with them regardless of whether your reader gives them a different meaning from what you had in mind.

For this reason, the BAFS started creating its own Communications Manual for writing to update the public on its services and accomplishments continuously. The Manual will provide guidance and advice on conveying information about the Bureau's programs, activities, and plans. Through this standardized guide, the Bureau aspires to ensure and guarantee the accuracy, efficiency, consistency, and effectiveness of the Bureau's communication strategies.



BAFS writers participate in the workshop for the drafting of the BAFS Communications Manual in April 2022. *Photo by: Joshua A. Saquing*

BAFS COMMUNICATION MANUAL



Department of Agriculture
Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries
Standards

We hope that by reading the multi-faceted information that the BAFS crafts and makes available through all its communication channels, and our readers will recognize the authenticity of BAFS and value its efforts. Allowing the stakeholders to understand better the services of BAFS will help build confidence, solid collaborative efforts, and support for the workplace culture in all its undertakings.

The ability to communicate effectively with the public is one of our top priorities, and we commit to being transparent within an ecosystem built on fundamentally interactive workplace communication. ■



Participants during the Workshop for Writing of BAFS Communications Manual in April 2022. *Photo by: Joshua A. Saquing*

On the farm and not wasting a moment to learn more

Katrina Maminta and Brooklyn Flores, Technical Services Division

There is no better way to learn agriculture and fishery products and practices than by immersing with the farmers in the field!

Undoubtedly, there is much to learn through conversation and actual farm exposure - gathering information for standards and learning interventions carried out by field workers. Because of this, data acquisition in the field is now a crucial step in creating knowledge products for Philippine National Standards (PNS).

Field data gathering activities aim to document the quality and food safety practices as specified in PNS. The data gathered in photographs and explanatory notes are used to develop various knowledge products such as explanatory manuals, illustrative guides, comics, and posters.

These field data gatherings are essential to get first-hand information for developing various knowledge products. Also, this serves as a venue for the development team to profound exposure to the production practices of the concerned PNS commodity. The readers and stakeholders will better appreciate and understand the PNS requirements and provisions.

For instance, during one of the field data



Demonstration of the deflowering and defingering techniques.
Photo by: Brooklyn S. Flores

gathering activities for the Explanatory Manual of the PNS Code of Good Agricultural Practice for Banana Production, the Team visited the Sunnjef Plantation Inc. in Region XII. The plantation, a PhilGAP certified since 2018, focuses on banana product exportation to its primary market - China and Japan. The operational manager, Mr. Alvin Genota, gave a tour around the plantation and packaging facility while describing its practices adhering to the PNS Code of GAP for Banana.

Mr. Genota stated during the interview that adopting the PNS Code of GAP for Banana minimized the produce rejections compared to their previous experience of produce rejects.

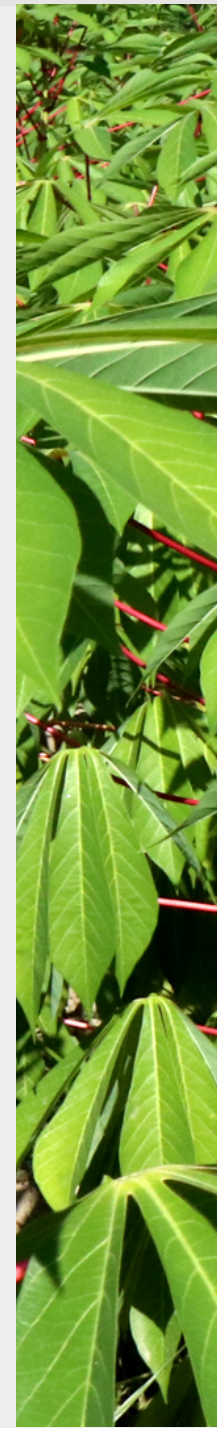
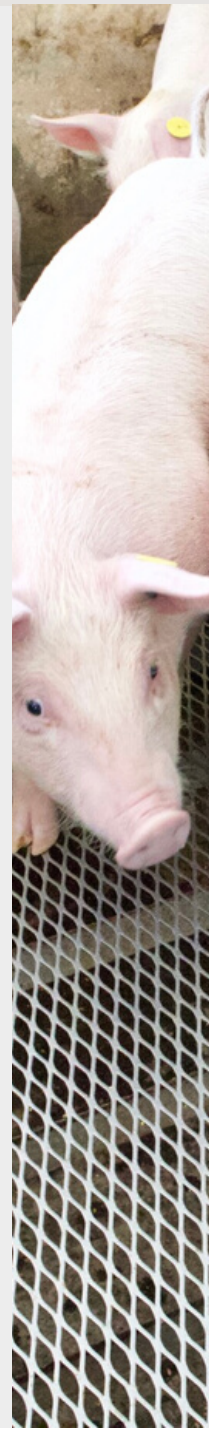
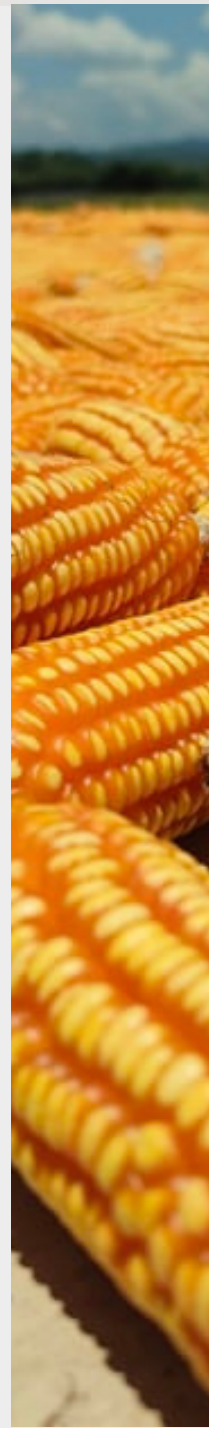
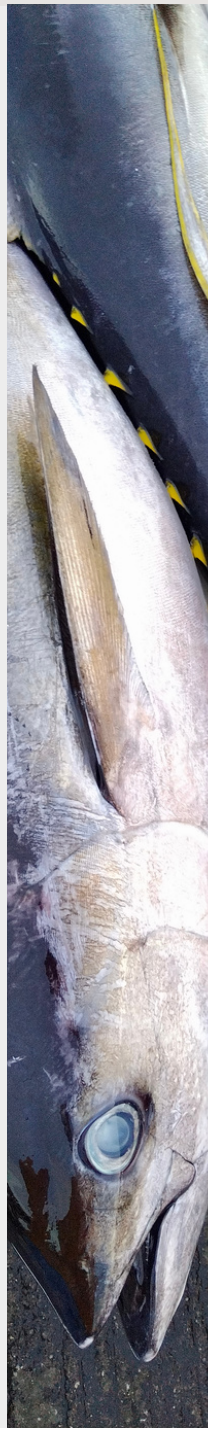


“Nung nagfollow na kami ng Good Agricultural Practice mas naging organized at consistent yung yield,” Mr. Genota added. Additionally, he said that while the PNS Code of GAP for Banana is simple to grasp, it would be even better if it had illustrations and explanations.

The visit to Sunnjeff Plantation, Inc, provided the team with the data that can be used in creating the explanatory manual for the PNS Code of GAP for Banana and also, in some ways, evidence and proof that adhering to the PNS delivers better results. Think about how much better results and market access farmers would experience if more of them shared a common understanding of the PNS’ minimum requirements.

In the first half of this year, the Team also visited the Ilocos Region, Nueva Ecija, Davao Region Zamboanga Peninsula, SOCCSKSARGEN, and CALABARZON are field data gathering sites for developing various knowledge products on PNS related to the tomato, rice, cassava, onion, cephalopods, tuna, swine, and meat.

The Field Data Gathering activity is a step in knowledge product development, a work in collaboration with the Technical Working Group members. ■



BAFS unveils its first SDD Standardization Manual

Em Bentulan, Timothy Justine Regalado, and Joshua Villanueva, Standards Development Division

The Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Standards (BAFS) has recently finished drafting its Standardization Manual, which aims to describe and elaborate on the norms in writing Philippine National Standards (PNS) and to have a common understanding of the rules in layout and formatting of a standard. Similarly, this serves as a tool to institutionalize knowledge management on standards development.

In compliance with their Quality Management System (QMS), BAFS formulated this manual which addresses several issues in the drafting and formatting PNS. BAFS initiated the manual development in 2018, which underwent a series of reviews and revisions from 2019 to 2021. The draft was finalized in 2022 through a writeshop in Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental.



The BAFS Standard Development Division finalizes the Standardization Manual during their writeshop in Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental.

Department of Agriculture
Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Standards
Standards Development Division



Standardization Guide No. 1: WRITING THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL STANDARDS



The Guide was subsequently endorsed to the BAFS-DA Director in the same year for approval. This document is drafted per the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Parts 2 and 3.

PNS are documents used as a reference in the development of technical regulations, learning and development activities, and the development of knowledge products. PNS addresses issues related to agri-fishery products, machinery, and infrastructures. Crafting PNS is the main output of BAFS via the mandate of their Standards Development Division (SDD). Usually, a new employee would need a guide on proper formatting on the standards being developed to ensure uniform document format following scientific and technical basis. ■



The Philippines, as the Permanent Chair, led the meeting with Brunei Darussalam as the host country. The Meeting was attended by delegates from Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam.

Four regional standards for horticultural crops endorsed

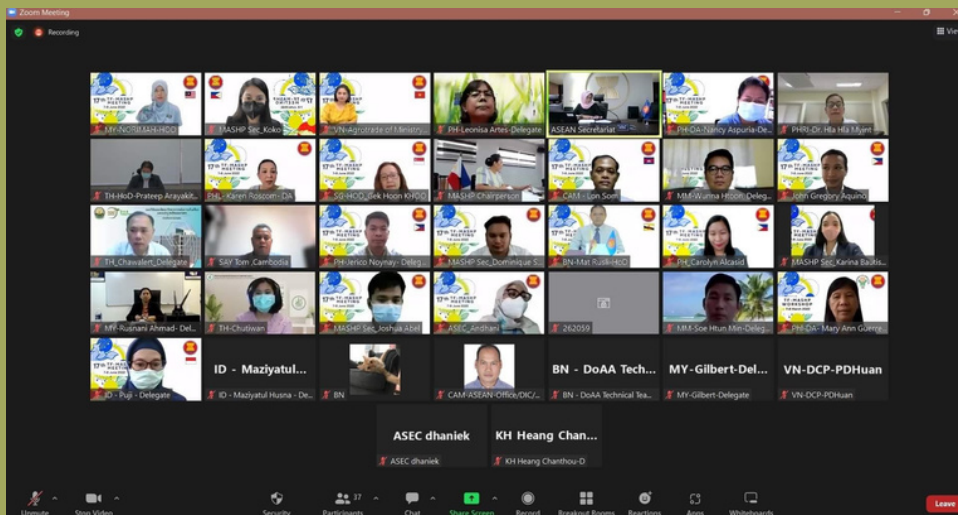
Kristel Alarice Aborido, Standards Development Division

The 17th Meeting of the ASEAN Task Force on ASEAN Standards for Horticultural Produce and Other Crops (TF-MASHP), held on June 7-8, 2022, endorsed the draft ASEAN Standards for Avocados, Gingers, Oranges, Longans, and Carambolas (Starfruits), through the ASEAN Sectoral Working Group for Crops (ASWGC) for approval as ASEAN standards.

As part of the country’s commitment, the Philippines presented the project document for table grapes for consideration in developing an ASEAN Standard for Table Grapes for new work for identified commodities in 2023. The AMS agreed that the Philippines would prepare the draft ASEAN standard for grapes which will be presented at the 18th TF-MASHP, together with the discussions to finalize the draft ASEAN Standard for Oranges and initial discussions of ASEAN Standards for Black, White, and Green Peppers.

The TF-MASHP aims to continue the collaboration among the ASEAN Member States (AMS) on the establishment of harmonized ASEAN Standards that will help improve the quality of agricultural products in the ASEAN region, facilitate intra- and extra-ASEAN trade, and ensure food security among the AMS. Cambodia will host the 18th Meeting of TF-MASHP in 2023. ■

17th Meeting of the ASEAN TF-MASHP



BAFS and participants of the 17th Meeting of the ASEAN Task Force on ASEAN Standards for Horticultural Produce and Other Crops (TF-MASHP) on June 8, 2022.



Road to Regulatory Impact Assessment Institutionalization

Alpha M. Lanuza, Technical Services Division

The Department of Agriculture and its regulatory agencies are now on the road to institutionalizing the conduct of regulatory impact assessment (RIA) before issuing any regulation.

On June 30, 2022, former Secretary William D. Dar approved the Administrative Circular (AC) 8 series of 2022 entitled *Requiring the Conduct of Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) in the Modification, Repeal, or Formulation of Existing or New Regulations in the Department of Agriculture*.

The said issuance details the RIA scope and its related process flow. Since the conduct of RIA is very tedious, the policy instrument listed programs, projects, taxation measures, budget-related issuances, and national emergencies as exemptions.

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The issuance also emphasized the role of an Oversight Committee tasked to oversee the implementation of the RIA in the DA, ensuring the issuance of quality regulations by the Department, and strong partnership with the Anti-Red Tape Authority (ARTA) as the competent authority for the ease of doing business in the country.

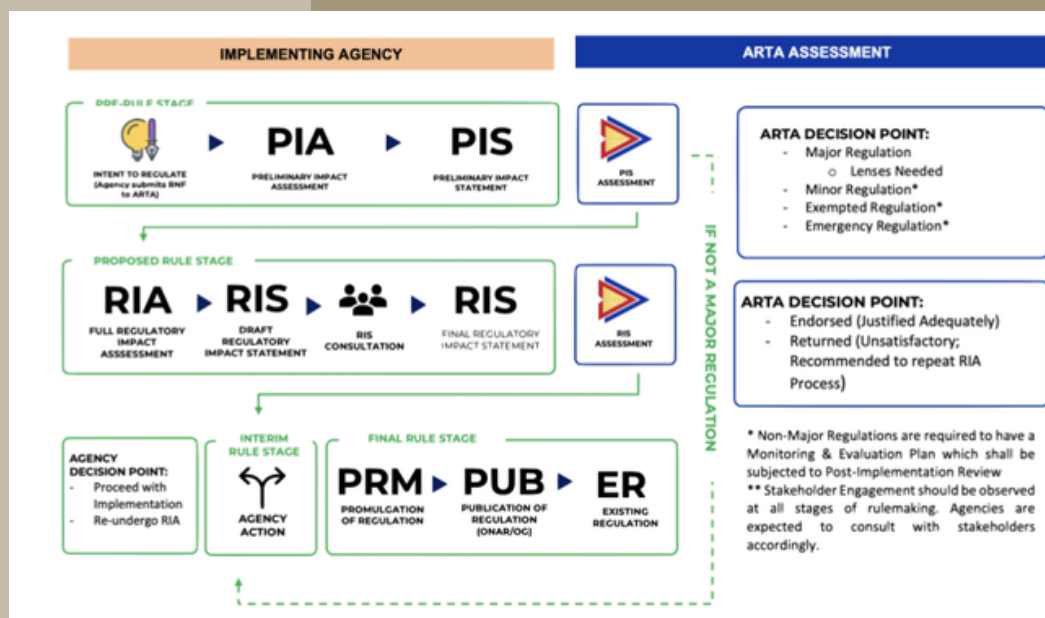
To observe the gradual and efficient implementation of RIA in the DA, a one-year transition period will focus on the conduct of A regulatory impact assessment (RIA), defined by the STDF, is a systemic approach to critically assessing the positive and negative effects of proposed and existing regulations and non-regulatory alternatives. RIA is used to ensure that regulations will avoid unnecessary burdens to regulated sectors or examine possible options other than regulations that could achieve a particular desired outcome. The process will prove that the chosen alternative benefits regulators and regulated sectors based on exhaustive quantitative and qualitative analysis.



Accordingly, RIAs can be used: (i) ex-ante, or pre-assessment tool considering measure for possible scenarios; and (ii) ex-post, as an evaluation tool that will assess how the existing regulations are implemented to determine costs and benefits of the baseline scenario. Various learning and development interventions and securing necessary resources such as financial support, staffing supplementation, and development of supporting documents like manuals and procedures.

The Department is currently undertaking several initiatives to complement this instrument. It includes the RIA training partnership with WINROCK and a project proposal under WTO- Standards and Trade Development Facility (WTO-STDF) on piloting Good Regulatory Practices in the agriculture sector using RIA as the tool. ■

RIA Process Flow





BUREAU OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES STANDARDS

"...ensuring consumers safety and product quality, and contributing to environmental protection, worker's welfare and enhanced market access."

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