

Panay News

THE BIGGEST DAILY IN THE VISAYAS

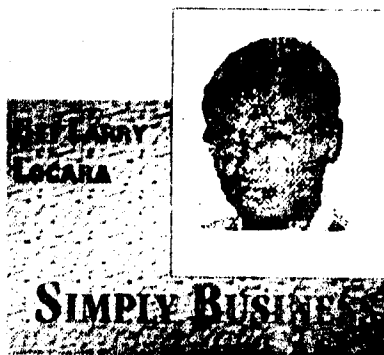
ENTERED AS SECOND CLASS MAIL AT THE CENTRAL POST OFFICE UNDER PERMIT NO. 274-90 DATED MAY 24, 1990
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Oil palm industry development on track

GOVERNOR Niel Tupas reacted favorably to the information given to him that the initiatives of the private sector and selected local officials in Dueñas, Iloilo might lead to a full-blown oil palm industry in Central Iloilo.

Gov. Tupas learned that despite the lukewarm support from Dueñas Mayor Pio Pama, the fledgling cooperative, Dueñas Small Farmers' MPC has gathered almost all preliminary information that will be presented to the oil mill investor in Davao City sometime early next month. All is needed are endorsements by nearby municipalities and the provincial government and the Sangguniang Panlalawigan that indeed, the oil industry is an essential addition to the growing diverse agro-economy of the province.

"I am ready and willing to endorse the proposed industry. In fact, we will welcome with open arms the entry of an investor who will ensure the processing and market of a crop that



is not only economically viable but environment friendly as well. I have heard that we do not lack proponents in the Sangguniang Panlalawigan who will sponsor a collateral endorsement," said Tupas.

As of now, SP members Romeo Palmares and Henry Anotado are ready to file the said resolution of support.

The trip to Davao City will depend largely on the initiatives of the Dueñas Sangguniang Bayan which is expected to fund the trip of key local

officials and a select group from the local cooperative. It is expected that the trip will seal the agreement between the growers and the investor who will assure the construction of a 20-ton per hour mill when the growers will also assure them of an area planted of at least 2,500 hectares.

The cooperative meanwhile amended its by-laws to prepare for a larger scale operation that will transcend the boundaries of the municipalities. Now they are renamed Panay Oil Palm Growers' MPC and have retained Mr. Rey Lau-a as its Chairman.

The cooperative has already gotten a commitment of at least 20,000 hectares, broken down as follows: Dueñas - 1,500, Dingle - 500, San Enrique - 1,500, Passi City - 3,000, Bingawan - 2,000, Calinog - 4,000, Lambunao - 4,000, Badiangan - 1,000, Janiuay - 3,000, Cabatuan - 1,000. Farmers and private entrepreneurs in other outlying municipalities not listed also came to the cooperative

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office to pledge participation once there is a go signal. Oil palm farms can be developed within 70 kilometers radius of the mill site.

Harvesting is done weekly or up to six times per month and this assures the farmer with a steady income upon full production. This is a departure from the traditional crops like rice and sugarcane. Aside from this, stalks of the oil palm are made into other products like sawali and baskets and are said to be as tough and long lasting as bamboo, but easier to work on

This becomes an added income source for the farmer and his family.

"It is my fervent hope that this initiative will come to fruition. This crop will not replace coconut as I was informed but rather these can be planted in areas left idle due to nutrient exhaustion or simply the lack of money to finance development. I will help find money for this through the lending windows of both government financial institutions and the private banks," concluded Tunas./PN