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IRRI and partners meet to conserve and promote heirloom rice of Northern Philippines



The International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) and the Department of Agriculture (DA) Regional Office conducted a two-day workshop for the Heirloom Rice project with its partners and stakeholders at Mountain Province, Philippines on 8-9 July.

The workshop was a good avenue to learn and benefit from the rich experiences of the partners who have so much to offer – and stand to gain – from the project, according to Digna Manzanilla, coordinator of the Consortium for Unfavorable Rice Environments, and the Heirloom Rice Project. The activity, which was organized by Dr. Manzanilla and the DA, included monitoring and evaluation ; developing competitive value chains and linking farmer's products to the market; capacity building for partners who will train farmers; and characterizing heirloom rice seeds, some which may soon become if not promptly conserved. Participants discussed their concerns; identified gaps; set plans and activities; and propose timelines and budget.



Dr. Nollie Vera Cruz, IRRI plant pathologist and leader of the Heirloom Rice project, also hopes that, heirloom rice might reach other potential markets to benefit farmers. In relation to this, the project will conduct a food tasting event for top restaurateurs sometime this year.

The partners of the Heirloom Rice project include the DA Regional office; provincial and municipal government units; Philippine Rice Research Institute; Revitalized Indigenous Cordilleran Enterprises, the Rice Terraces Farmers' Cooperative; and state colleges and universities from the provinces of Benguet, Mountain Province, Ifugao, and Kalinga.

Photos

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