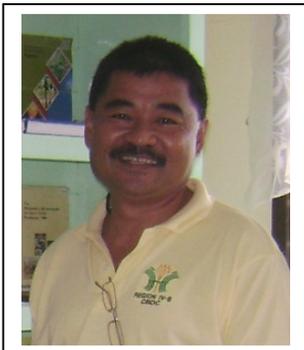


## ARIEL COLONGON: Stirring the Swine Industry of Palawan to a New Level"

*"Don't let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do". - John Wooden*



Ariel Colongon is an extension worker who loves and would not stop doing something for the local swine industry of Palawan, the declared natural sanctuary of the world.

He is popular among the local pig raisers and even among extension workers/ technicians in the province. He is called, "Brod Ayie" by his clients and colleagues.

His popularity did not happen overnight. Mr. Colongon had to work and learn hard to earn the trust and confidence of the people who knew him and believed in him.

By education, he was an Agricultural Engineer but he passed the Licensure Examination for Agriculturist, given by the Professional Regulatory Commission.

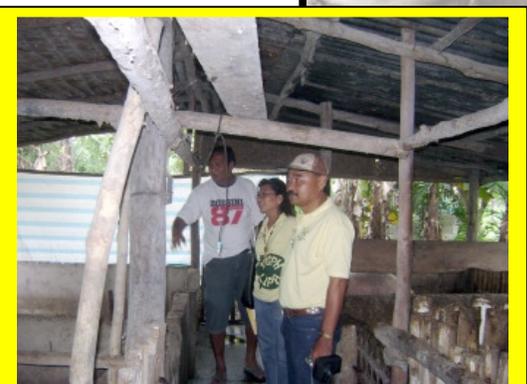
He was sent to ITCPH for training since he was the Farm Superintendent of the Dumaran Breeding Center in Palawan. He attended the 6<sup>th</sup> International Course on Pig Husbandry in 1994. The breeding center was a special project of the Department of Agriculture and was used for the dispersal project of the government.

After his training, he disseminated his 'new' acquired knowledge and skills on pig production thru lectures and technical assistance to local raisers. At the same time, he was able to properly and efficiently manage the DA project. It became a good source of stocks for pig raisers.

It was at this time that many raisers were encouraged to venture into pig production. Native breeds were replaced with upgraded ones and later, hybrids became popular. Ayie became busy providing technical assistance to farmers.

"Whenever I need technical assistance or when I have problems in my farm, I call or send text messages to Brod Ayie. And he readily assists me. In fact, I learned more things about pigs from him", shares Mr. Rey Carbonell, the Livestock In-Charge of the Iwahig Penal Colony (an amazing place in this province where the detainees could work outside their prison cells! We saw some of them when we passed by!).

Ayie assisted Mr. Carbonell in expanding and improving the latter's farm. His old farm uses indigenous materials with



*Mr. Rey Carbonell (in white shirt) shows his piggery to Quezy (ITCPH staff, middle).*



concrete flooring but the new one is a monitor-type pig house with deep litter facility. Ayie also helped him with the design of the housing and biogas installations.

Mr. Colongon also attended the Special Course on Waste Management during the International Course.

From the project, Ayie transferred to the Department of Agriculture – Regional Field Unit. He is now an Agriculturist II and designated as of the Officer-in-Charge of the Carabao Breeding Development Center.

Back then, he was also encouraged to start his own farm. From a 1-sow level farm, he now owns a 10 sow-level farm at the back of his house. “My farm became a showcase to local farmers. I want to let them see that there is money in pig raising”, he said.

By the early part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a lot of farmers engaged in pig production.

That time, the problem of marketing the pigs became a big concern for the raisers. The middlemen were buying the finishers at a very low price since the supply was high. Such situation discouraged some farmers to continue growing pigs.

Brod Ayie came to the rescue! He spearheaded the organization of local pig farmers into a cooperative so that they can have a collective “voice” in the marketing of pigs. Thus in 2005, the Palawan Hog Raisers Multipurpose Cooperative was born. Mr. Colongon is the incumbent Chairman. The cooperative had already established contacts in Manila for the marketing of local pigs when supply is high. During the visit to the province, the liveweight price was even higher compared to the existing price in Lipa City.

Also to decrease feed cost, he used his knowledge on feed formulation to come up with a type of feed given to starters until finishers and for breeders. The feed was a mixture of hog concentrate, rice bran and corn. Ayie also attended the 1<sup>st</sup> Animal Feedmilling Technology Course at ITCPH in 1994.

Municipal Assessor Edmundo Bacusa admits, “Ayie is my mentor. He helped me expand my piggery from a 7-sow level farm to a 28-sow level farm. I started in 2003. Brod Ayie designed the housing of my piggery and has provided continuous technical assistance to improve my farm. He taught my caretakers the proper management of the animals”.

Ayie has also a knack for trying new things. In 2001, he got a copy of an organic farming manual from a Korean advocate. He read the manual and from there learned the deep litter technology. He said, “I blended the Korean



*Ayie's farm uses deep litter facility (bottom picture).*



*Quezy poses with Ayie's client, Municipal Assessor Edmundo Bacusa (left).*

technology with the housing designs I learned at ITCPH". He used the technology in his farm and was successful in adopting it. According to him, the pigs did not have any health problems and the performance of the animals was better. In fact, several researchers on deep litter technology have visited his farm to see the results. He designed the new piggery building of Mr. Carbonell with the deep litter system.

At present, his major concern is how they could source cheaper commercial feeds for the province's pig raisers. He is working on a deal with another cooperative in Batangas City.

Surely, Ayie had stirred the quiet waters of the pig industry in Palawan. And his colleagues in the government admitted that Brod Ayie made a lot of contribution to the improvement of the industry and he is not stopping. As long as he can do something, Ayie would not stop.

Would an average of about 100 text messages stop you from doing something for the people who needs you and the industry that is flourishing?

