

Hybrid Rice Bringing More Success in Bicol

Tagumpay Sa Palay Article for June 2011

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A number of farmers in Bicol would claim that planting hybrid rice in their region is not an easy task as they have had good and bad experiences in this technology. Although there are some who assert that in managing hybrid rice fields properly, more agri-chemical inputs are required compared to inbred varieties, successful hybrid rice farmers believe that what you put in your rice farming investment would eventually translate to better returns in yield and income. This investment is the form of both farm inputs and time to ensure that the growth of the hybrid rice crops is managed effectively.

One of the farmers who attained good results in planting hybrid rice is Mr. Bobby Gaspi, a resident of Brgy. G. Del Pilar, Bulan, Sorsogon. In nearly nine years of adopting hybrid rice technology, he said that he did not hit gold every time but he still prefers hybrid over inbred varieties because that it has a greater level of investment recovery. Mr. Gaspi also said that the additional investment in hybrid rice seeds does not compare to the additional yields and income that he obtains from the technology. He believes that farmers should not think of hybrid rice seeds as not affordable because of its added value in rice farming.



In his years of planting hybrid rice, there was a time when he shifted back to inbreds because of a field performance issue of one old hybrid rice variety. For almost two cropping seasons on the year of 2009, he planted inbred rice until he was identified by a researcher from Pioneer Hi-Bred for varietal trials. It was during this time when Mr. Gaspi learned about the features and benefits of PHB71. Based on the information given, he planted this variety and became the first and foremost user of PHB71 in Sorsogon. He was very observant and keen to learn the different strengths of PHB71. At that time he only planted 5 kilos or 1 bag of PHB71 during the second cropping of year 2009 wherein he harvested 76 cavans in only 2,500-3,000 sqm area. Mr. Gaspi was very happy with the results that he decided to plant his total rice area of about 7 hectares with PHB71 during the wet season of 2010. Although there is a high risk of planting hybrid rice

during wet season because of possible typhoons that may lead to lodging and floods, and possible high level of pest and diseases, Mr. Gaspi still planted PHB71 in his farm. He even tried using PIO-DRUM technology in a 2,500 sqm area of his farm while the rest were transplanted.

After a few months he observed and noticed that PHB71 is a medium early maturing variety which can be harvested 110-115 days from sowing. This trait of PHB71 is advantageous according to Mr. Gaspi because late maturing varieties such as his previous hybrid rice is prone to damage of unpredictable weather conditions. He also observed that PHB71 is not as tall as compared to his previous variety, but he takes this as a good aspect because he said that it can reduce the risk of lodging.

Mr. Gaspi harvested an average of 192 cavans or 9.6 metric tons per hectare. For his PIO-DRUM trial in a 2,500 sqm of land, he harvested 68 cavans for 5 kilos of PHB71 demo seeds that he planted. He had two attempts in using the PIO-DRUM technology; at first he encountered infestation of rodents and birds. Armed with his experience on the first, Mr. Gaspi used CRH (Carbonized Rice Hull) on his next try to mislead the interest of rodents and bird. He covered the seeds with CRH so that rats and birds will not see the seeds.

At present, Mr. Gaspi is the prime contributor of Cheetah Rice Brand owned and registered by his family partners, the Emma Lupanario Rice Mill. We are proud to say that 60% of every sack they produce is PHB71. They supply Masbate with their rice and they received good feedbacks from customers due to the aromatic characteristic and good eating quality of their rice. Aside from having the milling station and supplying rice, Mr. Gaspi provides fertilizers, seeds and agri-chemicals in low interest for the farmers who cannot afford big investments for their farms.

Another satisfied hybrid rice farmer is Mr. Julian Liwanag, a native of Brgy. Capuy, Sorsogon City. Mr. Liwanag is a rookie in hybrid rice planting with experience only dating last January 2010. On his first venture, he chose to plant PHB71 with the influence of his relatives from Bulan, Sorsogon. With close coordination with Pioneer Hi-Bred sales representative in Sorsogon and guidance from reading materials, Mr. Liwanag targeted a yield of 11 metric tons per hectare which seemed very possible because he was able to attain an average of 350 spikelets per panicle and 24 productive tillers. Unluckily, his farm was infested with army worms which reduced his yield. But Mr. Liwanag was still hopeful at that time that he will recover due to the performance of his PHB71. Well he followed the reading materials to the letter so he was quite confident that he will still get a good harvest in spite of the infestation.



True enough, Mr. Liwanag was able to offset his losses from the army worm damage. He harvested 180 cavans in one hectare wherein he earned P70,100 net of costs, based on a P12.00/kilo of buying price. He farm inputs and costs are the following:

- seeds - P3,900.00
- fertilizer - P14,000.00
- pesticide - P5,000.00
- labor – P8,000.00
- irrigation - P1,000.00
- land preparation – P5,000.00

According to Mr. Liwanag, a higher income was more feasible when he planted PHB71 compared to his previous inbred varieties that only harvested a maximum 80 cavans per hectare.

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