



ABSTRACT

Demand and challenges of HYV corn production in the Philippines and the possible ways to improve value chain productivity for our smallholder farmers

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Demand for feed grains, mainly yellow corn, will continue to increase in our country due to our penchant for meat. However, the issue of too much rain at harvest during the major corn production season i.e. wet season, was not promptly and significantly addressed though production area, even in environmentally unsuitable areas, and yield were increasing due to increasing use of GMO seeds monopolized by multinationals. Hence farmers had good harvest, but the buying price was low because of shortage of post-harvest facility (drying and storage). This is a serious problem in Luzon and even in Mindanao where due to more favorable rainfall distribution, corn can be grown and harvested almost year-round. This problem is compounded by the low tariff corn substitute: feed wheat.

The most affected in this situation, income and environmental-wise, and are the smallholder farmers in far flung areas who depend on this crop for livelihood. Inputs are more expensive and corn buying price is lower due to logistics problem.

In addition to lobbying for substantial support to more post harvest facilities, PhilMaize is lobbying to allow local seed companies to use GMO genes that have been deregulated in its country of origin. This will bring down the cost of seeds.

Some measures by UPLB to help the small farmers include development by BioTech of soil microbial inoculant to reduce dependence on inorganic fertilizer. There is also a program at IPB to use native varieties to develop stress tolerant and higher yielding open-pollinated varieties. An inexpensive but efficient mobile corn mill has also been developed to cater to families living in far-flung areas. Different cropping systems have also been explored to enhance income, food security and environmental sustainability i.e. more corn, but not only corn.

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