

Farmers' Rights and Agroecology in Practice, and Ways Forward

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***Who controls seeds
Controls the Food;
Who controls food
Controls the World!***

Corporate Control of Seeds through Technological and Legal means will be reinforced through the coopted UN Food Systems Summit

Technological means

High Yielding Variety

Hybrid seeds

GMO

Terminator
technology

Legal means

Breeders rights – UPOV,
FTAs ; East Asia PVP Forum

Patenting of seeds –
WTO-TRIPS >>> PVP

MASIPAG Statement on Farmers' Rights (2002)

- Rights to land
- **Rights to Seeds and Genetic Resources**
- Rights to production technology and resources
- Rights to biodiversity
- Rights in decision making
- Rights to their culture and knowledge
- Rights to information and research
- Right to self determination (socio-political)

Farmers' Rights to Seeds and Genetic Resources

- Bundle of rights including, but not limited to:
 - > Use
 - > Save
 - > Exchange
 - > Multiply
 - > Sell (not in MASIPAG)
 - > Improve
- + to control seeds, and to refuse detrimental ones
- + freedom to choose what to use in own farm

Farmers' Seed System (80-90% Global seeds used)

>>Local seed system or Informal seed system

- Activities are integrated and locally organized; seeds dissemination through exchange and barter
- Variety choice, variety testing, introduction, seed multiplication, selection, dissemination and storage take place as **integral parts of farmers' production systems**, not discrete activities = **farm-saved seed**
- Farmers breed and select seeds based on their needs, preferences and adaptability to their local conditions.
- Perpetual state of development through seed selection

Masipag is Autonomous on Farmers' Seeds



MASIPAG Practice of Seed Commons in defense of Farmers' Rights

- Collective responsibility for the protection, provision and development of seeds and crop diversity
- Protection from private enclosure
- Collective management (community seed banks, seed exchange network, People's organizations, autonomous decision of farmers)
- Sharing of formal and practical knowledge

Seed Bank Components:

- Farmer Seed Breeders
- Seeds
- Storage
- Farm to produce and reproduce seeds
- Organized farmers for maintenance
- Farmer seed users
- Organization/network for seed diffusion

MASIPAG Collection, Development and Use of TRVs:



600+ Traditional Rice Varieties collected
1,299 Masipag rice
500+ Farmer-bred rice
75 Native corn varieties (12 bred corn)
6 native chicken gene pool



Masipag Rice Conservation and Breeding Support system



**National
Back-up Farm
(1)**

2,681 TRV, Masipag
rice & Farmer-bred rice



**Regional (2),
Provincial (5)
back-up farms**

300 to 800 TRV,
Masipag &
Farmer-bred rice



**PO-managed
Trial farms (188)**

At least **50**
varieties per TF



Verification farms

6 to 20 varieties



**Family Farm
Production**

At least **3** varieties




Masipag Farmer Rice Breeders



- 70 farmer-breeders
- 273 rice breeding crosses
- 500+ farmer-bred rice

Seed Flow from Backup Farm to Farmers

- 
- At least 50 varieties (20 grams each) sent from Back-up farm to a Trial farm/Seed bank
 - Planted side by side by PO members
 - Field day before harvest to select top ten varieties
 - Each farmer gets at least 3 varieties(20g – 500g) from the trial farm
 - Farmer mass-produce the seed

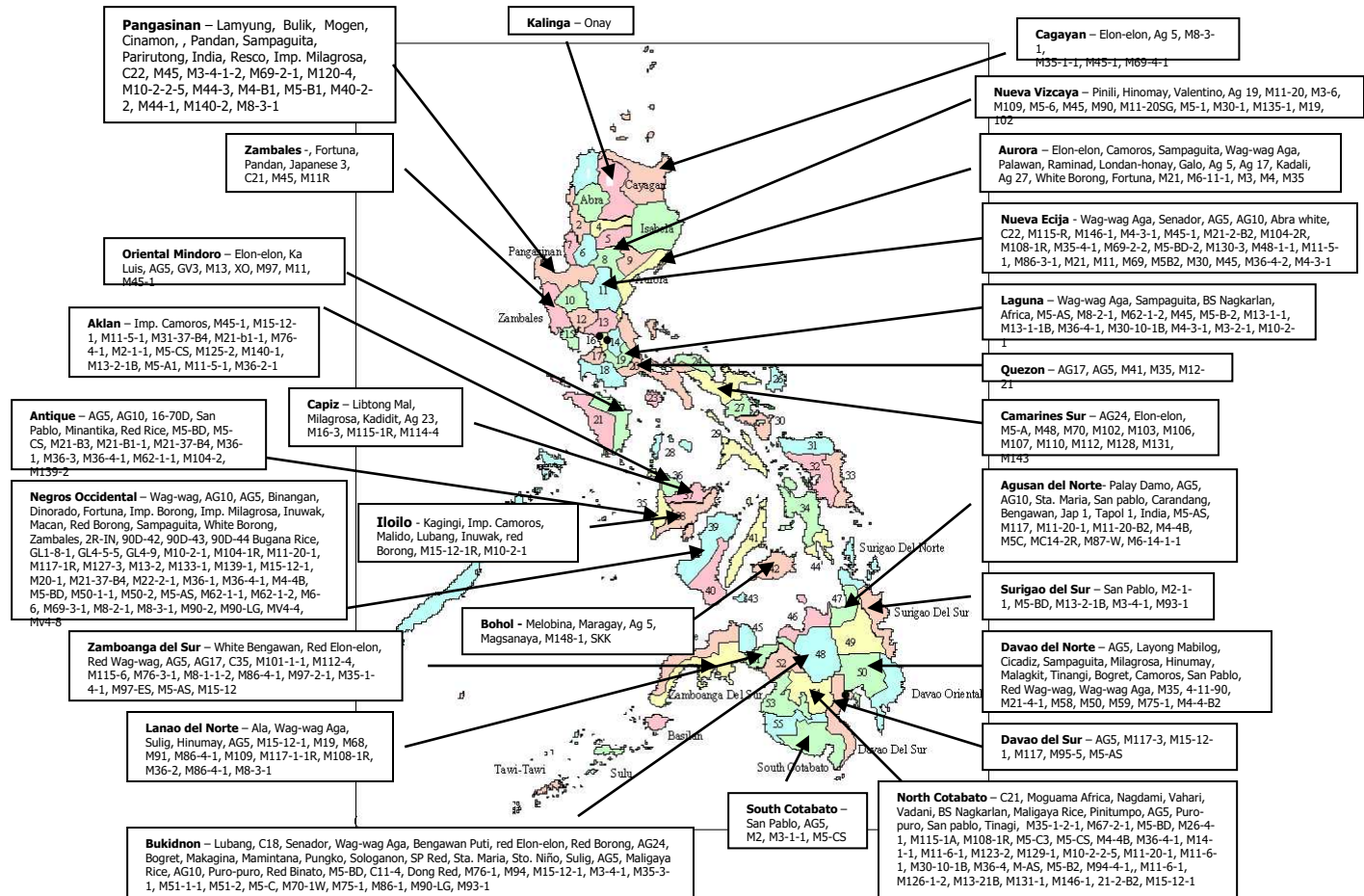
>>> bigger amount of seeds given only in response to disasters

Roles of Farmer-managed Trial Farm

- ✓ Farmers' laboratory
- ✓ Develop site-specific varieties
- ✓ Develop site-specific technology
- ✓ **Functional seed bank**
- ✓ Creative organizing
- ✓ Advocacy



Locally Adapted MASIPAG Rice and Traditional Varieties



Role of the Farmers' Organization

- ✓ Effective coordination, multiplier
- ✓ Planning and decision making
- ✓ Mutual support
- ✓ Ensure **diffusion** of seeds / benefits
- ✓ Sustainability of activities
- ✓ A system to **guard seed from biopiracy**

MASIPAG Position:

- Assert Farmers' Rights by practice
- Protection of Farmers' Rights
- Prevent Biopiracy
- No Patent on life



***Deglobalize and
Relocalize food systems
through Agroecology***

Agroecology with Four Dimensions



✓ **Environmental/Technical**: integration; sustainability; productivity; resilience

✓ **Economic**: diversify income; local/solidarity markets; fair short distribution web

✓ **Socio-cultural**: farmer-to-farmer exchanges; local culture, knowledge, spirituality; solidarity among people

✓ **Political**: decision making; decentralized participatory governance; productive resources in hands of people; organizations and networks of farmers / consumers



*Grow the food that you eat,
Eat the food that you grow!*



Agroecology Plus

Agroecology practice in MASIPAG:

- Has its foundation on Farmers Empowerment leading to Farmer-led research and development
- Supported through Farmer-Scientist partnership to develop farmers as scientists (Peasant Science)
- With a mechanism of diffusion through farmer-to-farmer; Farmers/Peoples organizations and networks



MASIPAG has gained Momentum as a Network:

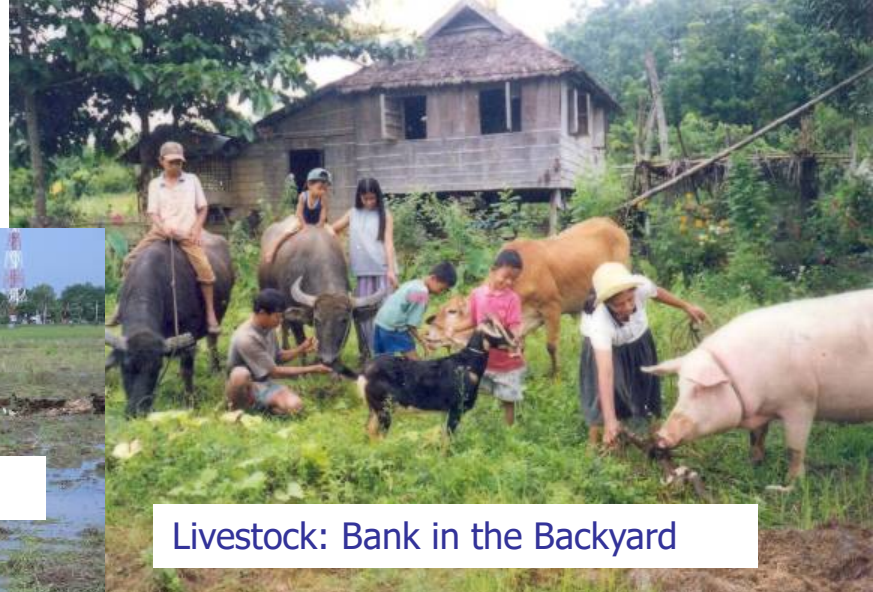
- 500+ farmers' organization in 63 of 82 provinces
- More than 100 volunteer farmer trainers
- 41 NGO members
- 15 scientists
- 70 farmer-breeders and apprentice

Diversified Integrated Farming Systems

Agroecology



Ducks: Natural pest control



Livestock: Bank in the Backyard



Local Markets for Local Economy and Food Sovereignty



Export / Supermarkets v.s.

80% income goes to corporations

- Low price due to oversupply
- Money repatriated to home country and spent in luxury items
- Many products wasted/rejected due to strict aesthetic quality control
- Erodes biodiversity due to monocropping

Local / Farmers' Market

80 to 100% income goes to farmer

- More stable price
- Money circulates and reinvested in rural economy
- All products beneficial, even in small amounts
- Promotes biodiversity





Other activities of MASIPAG towards Agroecology

- CIMME and Breeding
- Farmer developed and adapted technologies
- PGS organic certification, local processing and marketing
- Education and training (technical, economic, socio-political)
- Organizing, network strengthening and consolidation
- Climate change resilience
- Linkaging and Advocacy



Ways Forward

- ③ **FARMERS** re-assert control over agriculture and food through their control of seeds, farming technologies crop diversification, local marketing
- ③ **CONSUMERS** liberate our food systems from corporate control by patronizing local products in local markets, eating nutritious, safe and fresh organic products, building solidarity network with farmers

*Expression without comment,
struggle without confrontation.*



Conclusion

- >> Practical work is most effective way of asserting Farmers Rights.**
- >> In agroecology, the struggle to be independent from corporate control are the daily decisions and actions of the farmer.**
- >>>> We can mainstream, widescale, and globalize Agroecology. The choice and action is ours. No one can stop us.**



Thank you for your attention!