

FIC Marketing Academy rolls out new grab-and-go foods

Science Chief Fortunato T. De La Peña will be rolling out some 32 new grab-and-go foods during the Food Innovation Center Marketing Academy's (FIC Marketing Academy) graduation exercise for its first batch of "food designers" on June 25, 2022 at UP Town Center in Quezon City.

DOST-ITDI Director Dr. Annabelle V. Briones explains that, *"FIC Marketing Academy is the Industrial Technology Development Institute's (DOST-ITDI) one of a kind Academy."* She added that, *"The idea of a marketing academy is more than a decade old. But, it has recently stepped up its game by transforming into a digital-based learning venue."*

FIC Marketing Academy Project Team Leader and ITDI Deputy Director for Administrative and Technical Services, Dr. Zorayda V. Ang, on the other hand, explained that, *"We are different in that our sole focus is on development of the technical expertise of food designers with a view to better understanding our customers through market tests."*

"These new products should not be filed as reports then kept in cabinets," she added. Instead, FIC Marketing Academy employs the Stage-Gate system, which has become the industry standard for managing new product innovation excellence. The Stage-Gate system is both a conceptual and an operational model for moving a new product from idea to launch.

FIC Marketing Academy thus espouses new product development (NPD) based on two of the most valued customer needs -- control and alternatives

"Our food designers are honed on the techniques of market testing to find out how customers may influence the final outcome of a concept. It teaches designers to empower customers by listening to their feedback and using it to improve," Dr. Ang explained.

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She said further that FIC Marketing Academy knows that customers want choice, flexibility, and a range of options available to satisfy them. Most common among these are features such as healthy, quick and easy availability, no 'fuss and prep' or being ready-to-eat or drink, hence the term 'grab-and-go' foods.

These observations are based on test results conducted by DOST FICs located in state universities across the country.

Dubbed by FIC Marketing Academy as InnovEATS – Food Ideas & Creations, these products are outputs of its year-long training program which began on June 14, 2021. This year it will not only be the graduation of Year 1's batch, but will also be the launching of the 32 products that have been developed.

Funded under the DOST Grants-In-Aid Program, the Philippine Council for Industry, Energy, and Emerging Technology Research and Development (PCIEERD) monitors the project.

To encourage a wellspring of ideas, FIC Marketing Academy joined hands with the Food Processing Division (FPD-ITDI) in order to choose and award, from the 32 new products, this year's winners of the Most Innovative Product Award and Industry Choice Award. FPD initially started citing innovative products developed by its Regional FICs a few years back

Included in two screenings are the following products that are open for technology licensing or transfer at ITDI.

These include chichamatis (tomato crisps), tomango (tomato–mango juice), tomato–mango ketchup, mango-choco mix powder, tomato salsa, dinengdeng chips, mixed fruit crisps, and squash pesto sauce from Northern Luzon.

Southern Luzon has pinindot-to-go (Ready-to-Eat bilo-bilo), colored sweet potato flour, soy uh tea, smoked coconut milk, spicy tinapa flakes in coconut milk, Prepi Easy Squeeze (garlic, onion, and ginger puree), and quick cook lutik.

Meanwhile, Northern Mindanao worked on soymilk with corn grits, wombok powder, tomato-pineapple blend, instant seaweed salad, crab savor, calamansi-lagundi juice powder, RTE tuna congee, mixed root crops and fruit chips, and chevon sausage.

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Several micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) will also be introducing new items in their product lines. These are Nutri-Aces' lamb tomato sauce; E&B Farm's sisig oyster mushroom; COP Pili Sweets and Pastries' smoked sardines in coconut milk; RK Trading Services' tiyulah itum Spanish sardines; SJS Fish Trading's dried fish powder seasoning; and Trunk Gold Agribusiness Corp's coco savor, coco sap drink, and banana flour with peel.

From the 32 products, 18 will be chosen as qualifiers which will be individually awarded with Php30T in cash incentive and a plaque of recognition.

On top of these, four grand winners of the Most Innovative Award and two winners of the Industry Choice Award will receive Php100T each in cash prize, and a plaque of recognition.

Lastly, four second placers of the Most Innovative Award will receive Php50T each while the Special Award winner will receive Php30T in cash prize. (AMGuevarra\ ITDI S&T Media Service)

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