

## New animal facility to transform animal research standards



Science Chief Dr. Renato U. Solidum Jr. led the inauguration rites of the newly rehabilitated Laboratory Animal Facility (LAF) of DOST-ITDI on December 4, 2023 in Bicutan, Taguig City.

He was joined by Undersecretary for Scientific and Technical Services, Maridon O. Sahagun;

Undersecretary for Special Concerns, Dr. Teodoro Gatchalian; Assistant Secretary for Administrative and Legal Affairs, Dr. Diana L. Ignacio; Assistant Secretary for Development Cooperation, Rodolfo J. Calzado Jr.; Executive Director of the Philippine Council for Health Research and Development, Dr. Jaime C. Montoya. Other guests included the Bureau of Animal Industry-Animal Health and Welfare Division represented by Dr. Marie Shella G. Ordinario, and the Philippine Food and Drug Administration (FDA) represented by Director Ana Trinidad-Rivera.

The newly inaugurated DOST-ITDI LAF will elevate the method and system of providing for animal welfare, which includes its physical and mental needs, in compliance with Republic Act No. 8485 or the Animal Welfare Act of 1998.

It is equipped with state-of-the-art equipment to provide a safe and conducive environment for animals used in research and experimentation while also serving as a facility for the discovery of new drugs/ cure or "*tuklas lunas*" for various diseases.

Further, it promotes among other research institutions the ethical treatment of animals and upholds their rights. Cutting-edge technology in animal health and production, natural behavior; and feelings (affective states) are available in the facility. Among these is proper animal housing. The way animals are housed, for example, can cause welfare problems. Group housing in cages where factors such as temperature, amount of available space, and social grouping can cause animals to fight thus compromising their welfare.

*Inspired by Technology, Driven by Innovation*

LAF hence sets a benchmark for research institutions and encourages the adoption of similar standards across the country. With these technological advances, animals used in research are assured of humane treatment, but also allows researchers to explore and make new discoveries thus strengthening the Philippines' position in the global scientific community. It shows the world that the country is dedicated to conducting prime and transformative research in the pursuit of better animal healthcare solutions. With the DOST-ITDI LAF, the Philippines takes a momentous step forward in both animal welfare and progressive development. (**AMPallaya; AMGuevarra\ TSD**)