

RFICs-key to wealth creation, Science Chief



"Food innovations open the door to the universal accessibility of food. But, our Regional Food Innovation Centers or RFICs elevate innovation to the next level," Science Chief Renato U. Solidum Jr. said in his message during the FIC Summit held on February 15, 2024 in Manila City.

He added that, "RFICs provide safe and adequate food for local communities using their own fresh produce. In doing so, RFICs ensure that new wealth in the community is created and sustained."

The stress on wealth creation points to the Department's four pillars of development strategies with human well-being, wealth protection, and sustainability as the other three.

In his keynote, DOST Regional Operations head, Usec. Sancho A. Maborang, championed RFICs as the "... *pivot in nurturing sustainable food systems locally and nationally.*"

Undersecretary for R&D, Dr. Leah J. Buendia delivered her message digitally citing the importance of advancing food innovation.

There are 16 RFICs established by DOST nationwide with the aim to provide the local food industry efficient and modern food processing equipment in order to enhance their product quality and speed up their production. Regional Offices in cooperation with State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in the area assist the community in the development of new food products and production processes in order to make these more nutritious.

Inspired by Technology, Driven by Innovation

Meanwhile, a full body of department executives, led by DOST-ITDI Director Dr. Annabelle V. Briones, together with Food Processing Division Chief, Ma. Dolor L. Villaseñor, and OIC of the Office of the Deputy Director for Administrative and Technical Services Dr. Janet F. Quizon, graced the event. Regional food innovators nationwide completed the successful pooling of research creativity in the "Flavors of Progress" summit.

Further, Dr. Rico C. Ancog, Dean of the School of Environmental Science and Management (SESAM-UPLB), and Dr. Zorayda V. Ang talked about fostering resilient socio-ecological systems, and market validation, branding, and scaling strategies, respectively.

The summit thus served as the nexus of ideas for presenting project outputs with the Project Leader Ma. Dolor L. Villaseñor sharing milestones achieved under the Technical Support for the DOST RFICs project.

The unveiling of the OneFIC network database and ceremonial signing of the Pledge of Commitment followed.

With the completion of the DOST RFICs project, Dr. Quizon concluded the event with the announcement of the roll-out of the project on Modular Food Processing Facility (MMFPF) with Engr. Reynaldo L. Esguerra as project lead. (AMPallaya; AMGuevarra\ TSD-ITDI)

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