

ASSESSMENT OF ECOLOGICALLY-SOUND LOW/LAND
RICE-BASED FARMING SYSTEM IN SELECTED
MUNICIPALITIES OF OCCIDENTAL MINDORO

RIZZI ANGELICA T. DAGOS

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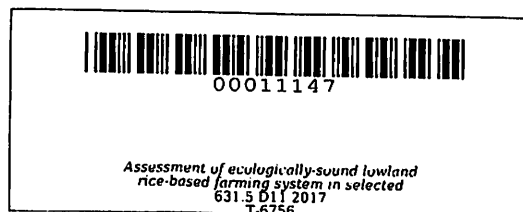
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**ASSESSMENT OF ECOLOGICALLY-SOUND LOWLAND RICE-BASED
FARMING SYSTEM IN SELECTED MUNICIPALITIES
OF OCCIDENTAL MINDORO**

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Submitted to the Faculty of the
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(Major in Farming Systems)



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ABSTRACT

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This study aimed to assess ecologically-sound lowland rice-based farming system in selected municipalities in Occidental Mindoro. Specifically, this study aimed to characterize the lowland rice-based farmers, determine their awareness and adoption levels in organic agriculture, assess the productivity and profitability levels of ecologically-sound lowland rice-based farms as compared to conventional farms, determine the problems encountered in organic agriculture, and analyze the sustainability of organic agriculture. It was conducted in Magsaysay, San Jose and Sablayan, Occidental Mindoro from June 2016 up to March 2017. This study employed descriptive method of research utilizing pre-constructed questionnaire administered to 133 farmer-respondents using an interview schedule. Key informant interviews, focus group discussion and observation were also utilized to gather data. Descriptive statistics were used to present the organized and analyzed data. Costs and returns analysis was used in determining the productivity and profitability of farming systems.

Results showed that ecologically-sound lowland rice-based farmers are old, predominantly male and literate. They have an average household size, with long farming experience, in general but with short engagement to organic farming practices. Farmers are owners of farm land and affiliated to organizations, and had availed credit. They have high awareness on organic agriculture, particularly what seeds, fertilizer, and pesticide to

use, as well as in organic fertilizer and organic pesticide production, but moderate level of awareness on organic marketing practices. They have moderate adoption of organic agriculture, particularly the choice of crops to use, crop rotation and soil management practices, commercial production of organic fertilizer, pests, diseases and weed management, growth regulators, pollution control, and soil and water conservation, but they have high adoption to fertilization policy but with very low adoption to diversity in crop production. Ecologically-sound lowland rice-based farms are less productive but more profitable as compared to conventional farms. Farmers encountered problems in production, certification and marketing aspects of organic agriculture. Organic agriculture in Occidental Mindoro is sustainable in ecological, social and economical aspects.

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A master's thesis submitted to the Department of Crop Science, Graduate School and Open Learning College, Cavite State University, Indang, Cavite in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Agriculture Major in Farming Systems with Contribution No. _____. Prepared under the supervision of Prof. Carlos N. Rodil.

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture remains an integral part of inclusive development as it is 2-4 times more effective in poverty reduction compared to other sectors of the economy. About 65 percent of the poorest population is employed in the agriculture sector and is currently contributing to about one-third of the gross domestic product of developing countries (Asian Development Bank, 2015). In the Philippines, agriculture still plays a very significant role in the country's economy (Ponce, 2004). GDP from agriculture sector for the second quarter of 2016 amounted to ₱135 million (Trading Economics, no date) employing 33 percent of the country's labor force (Cabigas and Moralla, 2011; as cited in The National Organic Agriculture Program).

One of the major agricultural commodities in the Philippines is rice. As stated by Department of Agriculture (DA) (cited by Gumapac, 2011), rice is a food staple – an