

# SEAFDEC AQD Matters

Newsletter of the SEAFDEC Aquaculture Department (AQD), Tigbauan, Iloilo, Philippines

## AQD works on genetic markers

AQD scientist Dr. Maria Rowena Eguia and technical assistant Ms. Jovy Ann Valera were in Japan from 30 October to 15 December 2011 to visit aquaculture facilities & research institutes involved in marine species conservation and stock enhancement; and to undergo skills development training on molecular marker & sample analysis.

Dr. Eguia and Ms. Valera visited the Mie-Owase Stock Enhancement Center or MOSEC for the hatchery & grow-out of abalone and marine fish; National Research



Welcome lunch at Tohoku University grounds with Dr. Maria Rowena Eguia (rightmost), Ms. Joana Joy Huervana (leftmost), and Dr. Minoru Ikeda (beside Dr. Eguia) & his graduate students

PHOTO COURTESY OF JJ HUERVANA

Institute for Aquaculture or NRA-Tamaki for the eel breeding and larval rearing; NRA-Nansei; and Mie Prefectural Fisheries Experimental Station, a research facility for lobsters and pearl oyster breeding. They also conducted analysis of abalone and mud crab samples for mtDNA sequence and microsatellite marker variation for use in the stock conservation collaborative project between AQD and Tohoku University.

Meanwhile, technical assistant Ms. Joana Joy Huervana, went to Japan from 4 November to 4 December 2011 to train on advanced

DNA marker methods. Shrimp samples were analyzed for the mtDNA sequence and microsatellite marker variation which will be used in the collaborative project between AQD and the University of the Philippines Visayas on the *Development of techniques for the production of good quality captive Penaeus monodon broodstock and spawners.*

Dr. Eguia and Ms. Valera's travel funds were provided by AQD and the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science or JSPS; while Ms. Huervana's travel was funded by the Government of Japan-Trust Fund and the Department of Science and Technology.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF JJ HUERVANA

(Above) Ms. JJ Huervana (left) and Ms. JA Valera (right) extract DNA from abalone and shrimp samples brought to Japan from AQD; thermal cycler (inset) is used for PCR amplification of the samples

## AQD chief attends project inauguration in Palawan

AQD Chief Dr. Joebert Toledo attended the blessing and inauguration of three aquaculture projects at the Department of Agriculture (DA) - Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) Inland Sea Ranching Station (ISRS) in Puerto Princesa City, Palawan on 17 January. The five million project includes

the rehabilitation of a 4-ha fishpond, the expansion of multi-species marine fish hatchery and seaweed tissue culture laboratory.

The facilities are results of successful collaboration among the DA-BFAR Central office and Regional Office 4B, SEAFDEC/AQD, and the Local Government Unit

of Puerto Princesa City. These facilities can also enhance technology of commercially important marine fishes & other cultivable species for adoption of small fisherfolk / fishery investors.

The multi-species hatchery is a joint project of the DA-BFAR, Puerto Princesa City (which provided the land),



DA Secretary Proceso Alcala (leftmost) and Puerto Princesa Mayor Edward Hagedorn (2nd from right) lead the ribbon-cutting ceremony with AQD Chief Dr. Joebert Toledo (rightmost) and BFAR officials; the newly-inaugurated marine fish hatchery (inset)

and AQD (which provided technical assistance and engineering designs). The facility showcases hatchery technology to address scarcity of seedstocks.

The ceremony was graced by DA Secretary Proceso Alcala along with Puerto Princesa Mayor Edward Hagedorn, DA-BFAR National Director Atty. Asis Perez, DA 4B Regional Director Cipriano Santiago, and BFAR 4B Regional Director Emmanuel Asis.

## Early visitors at AQD

A few weeks into the new year, AQD already had visitors from Maldives, Norway, and the Philippines.

On 18 January, Dr. Asree Shaheem and Mr. Ahmed Shaheem of Maldives visited AQD to seek technical assistance, gather information, and see AQD's facilities at Tigbauan, Iloilo particularly the hatchery of sandfish (*Holothuria scabra*).

Moreover, a tour of AQD research facilities in Tigbauan and Dumangas (Iloilo) and Igang (Guimaras) from 10 to 12 January was requested by RAISED (Romblon Agricultural Improvement for Sustainable



AQD researcher Ms. Ofelia Reyes attends to the queries of the visitors from Maldives at the Marine fish hatchery

Economic Development) in Romblon, Philippines. In addition to the tour, Mr. Artemio Mayote, project manager of RAISED was also briefed about AQD's research activities on abalone culture

and grouper nursery culture.

AQD also had visitors from the academe – Mr. Carlo Lazado of the University of Nordland, Bodø, Norway – who presented the results of his study *Next-generation sequencing of miRNAs in Atlantic cod* on 12 January; and the School of Technology students from the University of the Philippines Visayas (UPV) - who visited AQD facilities particularly fish health lab, microtechnique lab, and the scanning/transmission electron microscopy facilities.



UPV students take a short tour around FishWorld before the laboratory visit



## Research seminar



Mr. Carlo Lazado of the University of Nordland, Bodø, Norway talked about the *Next generation sequencing of miRNAs in Atlantic cod* on 12 January.

His study aimed to identify and characterize the miRNAome of Atlantic cod during the maturation cycle by SOLiD™ next generation sequencing technology.

According to Mr. Lazado, there is still an incredible number of microRNAs whose function have been unaccounted for, although many of them have already been discovered and identified.

Results of his study showed that a differential miRNA transcriptional profile in the gonads and muscle was observed between the reproductive and non-reproductive stage of cod. Gene target prediction also revealed that some of the identified miRNAs regulate genes that are important for cellular organization, cell signaling pathway and chromosomal organization. Mr. Lazado further added that these results are significant in understanding the biological processes, particularly the sexual maturation process in Atlantic cod.

## Safety first



**E**ducating colleagues concerning risks is the first and most important rule in the laboratory. Hence, a mini-seminar regarding safety in a chemical laboratory was initiated on 17 January by LFAAT (Laboratory Facilities for Advanced Aquaculture Technologies). There were seven short topics on classification & labeling, storage, handling, waste disposal,



AQD LFAAT manager Ms. Margarita Arnaiz (rightmost in white ) discusses the guidelines on the use of biotech laboratories

hazardous chemicals, do's & don'ts in the laboratory, and guidelines on the use of Biotech laboratories presented by

RM Albacete; PP Rivas; NB Bautista; J Panizales; J Valera; JB Chiongson; and M Arnaiz, respectively.

## AQD helps typhoon victims

**A**fter tropical storm Sendong hit northern Mindanao in the Philippines, AQD was able to collect a total amount of P 9,100 from the employees. These amount was deposited in the account of ABS-CBN Foundation Inc to aid the typhoon victims. Several beddings, fitted sheets, towels, and pillowcases were likewise donated to the victims.



## AQD obtains new internet service



**T**hrough the new service of PLDT broadband line (PLDT-BBL), AQD is now enjoying the high speed internet access which will allow its online users to interact and communicate in an easier and faster way. The PLDT-BBL offers speed of up to 2 Mbps and has replaced the previous SMART broadband line which only provided a speed of 1 Mbps.

# AQD staff changes

## Heads of offices and program leader



**Dr. Relicardo Coloso**  
Head, Research  
Division



**Dr. Myrna Teruel**  
OIC, Training &  
Information Division



**Dr. Leobert de la Peña**  
OIC, Technology  
Verification &  
Demonstration Division  
and concurrent Head,  
Demonstration &  
Packaging Section



**Dr. Maria Lourdes  
Aralar**  
Program Leader,  
Maintaining  
Environmental  
Integrity through  
Responsible  
Aquaculture



**Dr. Jon Altamirano**  
Head, Farming  
Systems & Ecology  
Section



**Mr. Stephen Alayon**  
OIC, Library and Data  
Banking Services  
Section



**Ms. Ma. Nira Grace  
Llona**  
OIC, Employees  
Welfare and Benefits  
Unit

## Transfer of office / Change of employment status



**Mr. Eufredo Dumaran**, former Driver from the Office of the Chief, transferred to Engineering Section as Dispatcher/Mechanic effective 1 February.



**Mr. Harold Figurado**, former monthly casual employee, has been hired on a fixed-term contract as Technician at the Farming Systems and Ecology Section effective 1 February.

## New personnel



**Mr. Mark Nell Corpuz** is a Senior Technical Assistant assigned at the Nutrition and Feed Development Section based in Binangonan Freshwater Station. He earned his BS degree in Fisheries *cum laude* from Central Luzon State University, Nueva Ecija and his Masters degree in Zoology from the University of the Philippines Los Baños, Laguna.



**Mr. Dan Joseph Logronio** is a Technical Assistant assigned at the Fish Health Section. He earned his BS degree in Biological Science Major in Microbiology *cum laude* from West Visayas State University, Iloilo City.

# CONGRATULATIONS TO THE...

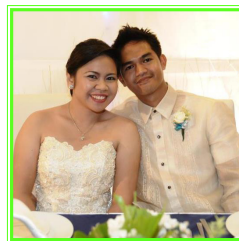
## newlyweds



**Ms. Sheryll Santander**, Technical Assistant assigned at the Farming Systems & Ecology Section, tied the knot with Mr. Marlou Avanceña on 17 December 2011 in Arevalo, Iloilo City



**Ms. Niña Perando**, Senior Technician assigned at the Breeding and Seed Production Section, married Mr. Paul Papaya in civil rites on 22 December 2011 in Tigbauan, Iloilo



**Ms. Aubrey Labating-Burlas**, Technical Assistant assigned at the Biotech Laboratory, and Mr. Michael Burlas, sought church blessings for their marriage on 21 January in Jaro, Iloilo City



**Ms. Kimberly Diane Caumban-Abroqueña**, Administrative Officer I assigned at the Office of the Chief, and Mr. Jeff Bogart Abroqueña sought church blessings for their marriage on 28 January in Jaro, Iloilo City

## and new moms



**Vinn Jedrek Panizales**, first child of Chemist Ms. Jeralyn Panizales and Mr. Mel Vincent Panizales, was born on 18 October 2011 at the Iloilo Mission Hospital, Iloilo City



**Markus Edric Salonga**, first child of Administrative Assistant II Sunshine Mae Salonga and Mr. Erwin Salonga, was born on 13 December 2011 at Iloilo Mission Hospital, Iloilo City



### AQD Matters

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