

**15<sup>th</sup> Negros Island Organic Farmers Festival (NIOFF)**  
Theme: “Organic Agriculture towards Food Safety and Brighter Market  
Opportunity”  
23 November 2022

Message of Dir. Bernadette F. San Juan, CESO II

**AMENITIES:**

**15<sup>th</sup> Negros Island Organic Farmers Festival (NIOFF)**

To Hon. Eugenio Jose V. Lacson, Provincial Governor of Negros Occidental;  
To Hon. Jeffrey P. Ferrer, Vice Governor of Negros Occidental;  
To Hon. Alfredo Abelardo B. Benitez, Mayor of Bacolod City;  
To Hon. El Cid M. Familiaran, Vice Mayor of Bacolod City;  
To the various Local Government Units of Negros Occidental and nearby provinces who are here today;  
To all of the representatives from other departments of the different Provincial Governments;  
To the representatives from the other National Government Agencies;  
To all of the organic agriculture practitioners and industry players who actively supports and participate in this annual celebration;  
And to all other attendees to this Organic Farmers’ Festival; To our beloved Negrenses; A great and blessed day! *Maayong adlaw!*

**MESSAGE:**

There is always a sense of joy and fulfillment whenever I am invited to attend festivals honoring our dear farmers. Today, what really delights me about this particular farmers’ festival is that, it gives the spotlight to our dear “organic” farmers thence it is a great pleasure for me to extend my sincere good wishes and gratitude to the Negros Occidental province for staging this symbolic event in the name of organic agriculture, food safety, and brighter market opportunity!

*Damo gid nga salamat!*

Just like our theme for this festival, “Organic Agriculture towards Food Safety and Brighter Market Opportunity”, I can confidently say and attest that in organic agriculture or simply OA, food safety is guaranteed—there is no denying about the boundless benefits of OA. But at the same time, we also acknowledge the gaps in market opportunity in the OA industry that can be plugged by well-intentioned members of the community.

That is why, I would like to take this opportunity, as the Director of the National Organic Agriculture Program or NOAP to thank all of you for constantly believing and adopting the practice of organic farming in the Negros Island. Thank you very much for your unswerving commitment in the expansion and development of the

industry and for remaining steadfast against the challenges of times.

Personally, this really mean a lot to me because I truly believe that when you go into organic farming, you do not only protect yourself, your family, or the people who buys your organic products from the harmful effects of chemicals but you also advocate for environment fortification which is in line with both of our national celebrations this November-- the National Organic Agriculture Month and the recent

Global Warming and Climate Change Consciousness Week which we kicked-off last Monday in the DA Central office. Also, fostering OA system is caring for the future which is allied to Negros Occidental's provincial mantra, "The Future is Now" so thank you for acting as early as "now".

Well, as we are all aware, the development of the agricultural sector, particularly the Organic Agriculture industry is challenging during these trying times therefore, our responses are decisive, innovative, integrated, and strategic. I know we cannot do everything at once as much as we want to, but holding relevant gatherings like this serves as the pivot point to spur participation and collaboration among and between our OA stakeholders, agripreneurs, farmers, our local chief executives, and government officials.

Fervently, rest assured that the National Organic Agriculture Program is here for you and currently toughening up for the global challenges ahead that could dampen the continuity of food productivity, food safety, and mitigation of climate change: our farmers are feeling the pinch of global rising fuel prices and costs of fertilizers, which have now tripled. The entire world has been subjected to high consumer price inflation brought by the disruption of global food supply chains during the pandemic. Climate change and natural disasters are upon us, and frequency of typhoons are making agricultural damage a common sight.

Because of these reasons, we find solutions and on-the-ground actions: we are prioritizing the Certification of Participatory Guarantee System or PGS; establishment of OA Livelihood Projects; massive production of organic fertilizer and soil ameliorants through the Composting Facilities for Biodegradable Wastes or CFBW and Small Scale Composting Facilities or SSCF; inventory and promotion of OA zones per municipality and city. All of these will aid the changing needs of our OA practitioners and will definitely ease the effects of climate change.

Once again, I want to reiterate that the NOAP is here for you! The government is here for all of you! But we also need your cooperation. So at this point, I encourage everyone, despite the limitations and challenges during these times, to expand their knowledge-arsenal for the propagation of organic agriculture. We sought your support to take advantage of this celebration and all the initiatives of the government to strive for the advancement and elevation of our plight.

We need not only to be informed on the boundless benefits of organic agriculture but also there is a dire need to be engaged in the creation of local and national

strategies in the promotion, propagation, and further development and implementation of organic agriculture in the country.

Finally, yet importantly, I hope that more Filipinos will be engrossed to go into organic agriculture especially here in Negros Island for a safer and healthier Philippines! This time, let us move forward from the mishap of these present time and aim for a sustainable OA industry!

Once again, a great and blessed day to each and everyone and I wish a worthwhile and successful 15<sup>th</sup> Negros Island Organic Farmers Festival! *ABANSE NEGRENSE!*

*Marami pong salamat* and may God bless us all!