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DA says tobacco 'dust' beneficial to organic aquaculture

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QUEZON CITY, Jan. 20 (PIA) -- The Department of Agriculture (DA) on Friday said that tobacco is not only a major ingredient in the manufacture of cigarettes, but could also be used for sustainable aquaculture practices, which could uplift both farmers' and fishers' income through organic methods.

In a statement, the agency said this was demonstrated recently during the launching of sustainable aquaculture practices using tobacco dust in the province of La Union by the National Tobacco Administration (NTA) in collaboration with other government agencies. The NTA is an attached agency of the DA.

During their presentation at a farm in Sto. Tomas, NTA Administrator Edgardo D. Zaragoza showed how tobacco dust can address the degradation of fishponds due to highly toxic chemicals.

Zaragoza also presented a duly tested, standardized, pure tobacco dust formulation, called Tobacco Dust Plus, which he said is intended as molluscicide to control snails and other predators in fishponds.

At the same time, he presented how tobacco dust can serve as a fertilizer to promote the growth of "lablab" (a natural fish food), and as soil conditioner.

This is intended to replace the long-banned, highly toxic, cyanide-based, inorganic chemicals being used in the preparation or sterilization of fishponds before the stocking of fingerlings, Zaragoza said.

"Tobacco dust is organic, readily degradable, and environment-friendly. The absence of pesticide residues contributes to the marketability and exportability of local fish and ensures consumer safety, aside from being free from chemical residues," he added.

This has been proven in a series of studies conducted by the NTA in collaboration with Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center, the Iloilo School of Fisheries in Iloilo, the DOST/Philippine Council for Aquaculture and Marine Resources Research and Development (PCAMRRD) and at the BFAR offices in Region III (Bulacan, Pampanga, Bataan) and Region I (Pangasinan and Ilocos Sur), he added.

The studies showed that by following recommended production technologies demonstrated in the farm, there was a marked decrease in the mortality rate of fingerlings from 20 percent to only 5 percent, resulting in about P20,000 savings on production cost per hectare per grow-out cycle.

As a pioneering business venture, the production of tobacco dust also helps create new business opportunities, generates additional employment and creates more income for farmers, the NTA chief said.

It also increases benefits for tobacco growing areas as it may serve as a “safety net” for farmers negatively affected by the government’s anti-smoking campaign. (DA/RJB/JCP-PIA NCR)

 **Tags:** [[Department of Agriculture](#)] [[National Tobacco Administration](#)] [[Tobacco Dust](#)] [[Aquaculture](#)] [[Sto. Tomas](#)] [[La Union](#)]