

Tobacco agency completes training on paper making

By Teddy P. Molina | Updated March 7, 2004 - 12:00am

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BATAAC, Ilocos Norte – Officials of the National Tobacco Administration (NTA) are upbeat over the prospect of having tobacco farmers boost their income further after setting the stage for handmade paper making with the use of discarded tobacco stalks.

This was learned yesterday as NTA Administrator Mert Ellorin who said that the agency has just concluded a training on handmade paper production here involving farmer-leaders from four tobacco-based cooperatives from Pangasinan, Ilocos Norte and Ilocos Sur.

The four-day training which was also attended by NTA senior agriculturists in the Ilocos Region and key personnel from the NTA central office also tackled the mechanics and wherewithal of putting up a small-scale handmade paper business activity.

NTA farm development manager Dr. Robert Bonoan identified the tobacco-based cooperatives involved in the training as Lubigan Multipurpose Cooperative (Badoc, Ilocos Norte), Cuancabal MPC (Cabugao, Ilocos Sur), Ranget MPC (Tagudin, Ilocos Sur, and Aramal Tuko MPC (San Fabian, Pangasinan).

Bonoan headed the central office team that organized the training along with Charlie Gaoiran, a Department of Trade and Industry official and NTA researchers who served as the resource speakers.

Handmade paper, Ellorin said, is a type of specialty paper made without the use of machine. Simple tools like mould and deckle, rolling pin, and like devices are used.

It is commonly used for all-purpose cards, stationeries, invitations, gift wrappers, bags, boxes, and artists’ paper-material for their drawing and water color printing.

Ellorin had earlier ordered the agency’s research and market development and regulations departments to accelerate the development of tobacco’s other uses to boost farmers’ incomes and revolutionize the tobacco industry that is facing threats from anti-smoking advocates.

He said that a backyard or cottage scale handmade paper operation can earn a net income of P7,483 a month for a tobacco farmer. The operation would involve 156 kg of tobacco stalks per month this would yield 60 kg or pulp.

The pulp output can be converted into 4,980 sheets of A4 size and 90 sheets of cartolina size handmade paper, it was learned.