

Meet San Jacinto's Queen of Bt Corn: Rosalie Ellasus of San Jacinto Pangasinan



Being a woman in a male-dominated field such as agriculture, Rosalie Ellasus has made a mark for herself in her hometown of San Jacinto, Pangasinan for being an authority on Bt corn.

Dubbed the “Queen of Bt corn,” she proudly advocates the merits of science in agriculture through her own experience.

“As an advocate of biotechnology, hindi ako nahihiyang i-share ang experience ko sa mga tao. Kailangan natin ma involve ang agriculture sa technology dahil kung wala, maiwan ang Pilipinas. (As an advocate of biotechnology, I am not ashamed of sharing my experiences with other people. I believe that we need to involve the agriculture sector in technology or else, the Philippines will fall behind.)” she said.

Ellasus, a rice and corn farmer from San Jacinto, Pangasinan is the epitome of gender empowerment because she is not only a leader among farmers' groups in her area. She is also working with the Municipal Disaster Risk and Reduction Office. She is also a proud graduate of the government's Integrated Pest Management in Farmer Field Schools (IPM-FFS) where she learned about agriculture trends and techniques.

Ellasus shared that she is among the pioneers of Bt corn in 2002 when it started field trials in Pangasinan. As a farmer who has experienced planting conventional and Bt corn, she said that the difference was massive in terms of management and yield.

She said that the process was very tedious for conventional corn because there is a certain timing needed for plowing, fertilization, weeding, detasseling, and process preparation. Even spraying needs to be scheduled. The process was laborious and expensive since additional manpower was needed for managing the farm.

However, with Bt corn, there is less need for maintenance as it is already resistant to Aflatoxin. The yield is also more productive and the quality meets the standards of traders and millers so there is less tendency for rejection.

“Kapag high yield, mas maganda ang profit, Nakita yan ng mga group of farmer adaptors ng Bt corn kaya marami din akong nahikayat dahil sa pagkwkwento ko sa mga meetings. Marami din sa ibang lugar na magmamais ang nag iimbata sa akin. (When there is high yield, there is better profit. Farmer adapters were able to see that and also there were those who were encouraged by my sharing of my experiences with Bt corn in meetings. They always invite me to talk about it,” she proudly shared.