

Assessment of the Status and Prospects of Agricultural Communities: Input to Support Commercialization and Farm-Tourism Promotion Schemes

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Received: July 17, 2022; Accepted: August 10, 2022; Published: August 16, 2022

Abstract

Capitalizing on the potential of Farm Tourism as a catalyst for community development and an alternative source of income for farmers, the study was conducted to assess the status and challenges faced by agricultural communities in the town of Hermosa, Province of Bataan, Philippines to generate information to evaluate the tourism prospects of its farm sites. The study made use of an embedded mixed-methods design to assess the farms quantitatively and determine the status and challenges in farming as experienced by the farmers. It was revealed that farm sites with the highest potential to be farm tourism destinations bearing scenic landscapes and cultural value are located in upland areas, mostly privately owned ranging from 1 to 4 hectares in size with variable harvest seasons applying the traditional way of farming. Accessibility is subject to the specific area, with minimal access to basic utilities and site facilities but with provisions for development. Emerging themes as to the status and challenges faced by farmers are inadequacy of resources; fluctuating productivity; vulnerability of the quality of produce and profit unpredictability. Farm Communities may work together with the Government to maximize and exhaust their fullest potential to generate alternative sources of livelihood through Tourism while maintaining food security.

Keywords: Farm Tourism, Agricultural Community, Embedded Mixed Method, Central Luzon, Philippines

1. Introduction

The study is in response to the growth prospects in Central Luzon brought by emerging industries and investments. As per the Department of Trade and Industry, Region III is envisioned to become the industrial heartland of the Philippines and the Asia Pacific; an international transshipment hub; and a showcase of a vibrant and competitive agriculture sector, as they noted that Central Luzon is the logical destination for investments and leisure (DTI, 2019). The study seeks to explore the possibilities and prospects in combining agriculture and Tourism.

Despite domestic and external challenges, the Philippines experienced in the past, Central Luzon remained one of the core regions that contribute significantly to the overall growth of the country as ignited by an exemplified performance of the region's emerging cities and special economic zones, with Clark International Airport as the main driver for growth in the region, the Department of Tourism (DOT) expects Central Luzon to play a major role in boosting domestic tourism in the country (Gatdula, 2013).

The opportunity to combine emerging industries in the province of Bataan such as its seaports, Tourism, industrial and agricultural sectors could be the diversification that the Tourism Industry may capitalize on. One of the 11 towns and 1 component city of the province of Bataan, Hermosa, has all the potential elements as it develops its economic zone and agricultural areas.

The study assesses the status and prospects of Agricultural Communities in the town of Hermosa as input to the Formulation of a Support Commercialization and Farm Tourism Promotions Scheme. Specifically, it sought to answer the following specific objectives:

- 1). To determine the Profile of Select Agricultural Communities in the Town of Hermosa in terms of:
 - 1.1. Location
 - 1.2. Size
 - 1.3. Type of Agricultural Commodities Produced

- 1.3. Harvest Season
 - 1.4. Farm Ownership
 - 1.5. Farming Methodology Used
 - 1.6. Accessibility
 - 1.7. Amenities
 - 1.8. Attractions
- 2). How may the challenges and prospects in Agricultural Communities in the town of Hermosa be described in terms of:
- 2.1. Resources
 - 2.2. Productivity
 - 2.3. Quality Produce
 - 2.4. Profitability
- 3). What are the implications of the study to the Farm-Tourism Sector of Bataan; farmers and other stakeholders?

2. Literature Review

The Philippines is an agricultural country with a land area of 300,000 sq. km. (worldatlas, 2019) where 41.72% of which is agricultural land as of 2014 according to the World Bank collection of development indicators, compiled from officially recognized sources (Trading Economics, 2014). As the Philippines recognizes the importance of agriculture in making food available and other products to sustain and enhance human life along with providing livelihood, the country recognizes that tourism, coupled with agriculture extension services, can disseminate the value of agriculture in the economic and cultural development of the country that may serve as a catalyst for the development of agriculture and fishery communities, and provide additional income for farmers, farmworkers, and fisherfolk. It is with this maximization of opportunities that the benefits can be derived from agriculture and tourism combined; the declared policy of the State to provide the policy and enabling environment for the encouragement, development, and promotion of farm tourism in the country. This act is known as the Farm Tourism Development Act of 2016 (Official Gazette, 2016).

Food tourism has increasingly gained popularity over the years, tourists are drawn to visit destinations for their local produce and a handful of tourist destinations are centering their product development and marketing accordingly. With food being deeply rooted in its origin, destinations are marketing themselves distinctively that appeal to tourists through their flavors (UNWTO 2012). With destinations establishing signature dishes creating particular branding, the process by which food is consumed is in itself an attraction and so is how they are processed and managed.

Food according to Le (2017) is an important part of a culture, traditional cuisines and delicacies are passed on from one generation to the next and operate as a cultural identity, those unique cuisines can reflect the unique history, lifestyle, values, and beliefs.

Based on the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in its 2009 study on the impact of culture in tourism; culture tourism is one of the largest and fastest-growing global tourism markets. With culture and creative industries, the promotion of destinations has increased their competitiveness and attractiveness. This is one of the motivations of many locations, in developing their tangible and intangible cultural assets as a means of developing a competitive advantage in the tourism marketplace and creating a distinctive identity despite globalization.

Agricultural and Fishery productions are major sources of income for the People of Bataan. Based on the Bataan Sustainable Development Plan (PMO, 2006), the Municipalities of Dinalupihan, Hermosa, Orani, Samal, Abucay, and Pilar are targeted to become the main contributors to Agro-industrial production.

According to Business World, 2019 The Philippines' farm tourism sites have helped boost the country's tourism potential, as total foreign visitor arrivals attributed to agri-tourism grew by 10.24% from January to May 2018. The Philippines is a good agri-tourism destination because of its natural resources and biodiversity. Some of the top farm tourism destinations are organic farms, nature-friendly farms, and health and wellness farms. Several Local Government Units started taking advantage of their resources and are promoting local tourism, which greatly increased local job creation. For instance, in In La Union, considered as the surfing capital of the Philippines, increased tourist arrivals by 25 percent in 2017 with 591,432 tourists of which 18,000 visited farm tourism sites

growing from 6,000 in 2016; with an average income of 25,000PhP to 60,000PhP per month, there are now 23 farm tourism sites in La Union, including Lomboy Farm, Lotus Farm, Rocapor's Farm, and Fergie Navarro Farm that is a certified Good Agricultural Practice vegetable farm. With a similar potential of Bataan comparable to such provinces in Luzon to have farm tourism destinations, an assessment study such as the proposed research may be beneficial not only to the Provincial Tourism, Provincial and Local Government Units but to the farmers as well, with prospects on making a profit not just from their yields but through opening their farm gates to tourists as well.

3. Methodology

The study assesses the status, challenges, and prospects in the agricultural sector of the town of Hermosa. Qualitative and Quantitative research designs were utilized in the study. Quantitatively, the inventory of each of the agricultural communities was profiled. A survey Checklist based on the Department of Tourism's Site/Attraction Evaluation Sheet (2017) was used as the main assessment tool in the study as the most appropriate means to profile the thirty-six (36) participating farms from the thirteen (13) Barangays identified by the Municipal Agriculture Office. Data gathered was processed using SPSS with Frequency and Percentage for the statistical treatment.

In the Qualitative part of the study, interviews were conducted to determine the challenges and prospects farmers in the communities see and experience with a researcher-made interview guide formulated with a semi-standardized interview where the principal questions are prepared beyond the specific questions, the interviewer was able to freely probe as the interview commences. Narrative Thematic Analysis was used on the collected interview transcripts where participants' identity was kept confidential and was only given labels as Participants and other identifiers such as names and locations were concealed. The coding process along with the progressive process of sorting, coding, and analysis of the emerging themes was performed.

Nestled in natural values that cover natural resources and habitats, cultural tourism, and recreational values, the municipality of Hermosa with 23 barangays is the research locale of the study. Using the purposive sampling technique, the participants of the study were the farmers, farm owners, farm organization members, and leaders. Ocular visits, observations, inventory, and interviews were conducted to fully analyze and determine the value of each Agricultural Communities in the Town and determine amongst the 23 Barangays which area in Hermosa is considered to be Agriculture Tourism/ Farm Tourism Destination.

4. Results and Discussion

As seen in Table 1, the majority of the farms identified in the study are located in Barangay Sumalo, this is probably because its geographic location is in the upland area with its vast open farmlands. Agriculture is the primary industry residents venture to as they maximize the use of the natural resources around them. As stated in the National Geographic Resource Library on rural areas, developing countries often have resource-based economies with most people making a living from agriculture, timber, mining, or other harvesting natural resources often located in rural areas (National Geographic Society, 2020).

Table 1. Distribution of Farms According to Location

Location	Frequency	Percent
Bacong	3	8.3
Balsik	1	2.8
Cataning	1	2.8
Culis	4	11.1
Daungan	1	2.8
Mabiga	4	11.1
Mabuco	1	2.8
Maite	2	5.6
Mandama	1	2.8
Palihan	2	5.6
Saba	4	11.1
San Pedro	3	8.3
Sumalo	9	25.0
Total	36	100

Table 2 reveals that the majority of the farms in the town of Hermosa measure 10,000- 20,000 square meters, which is about the average farm/ holdings in the Philippines based on the Census of Agriculture in 2012 that there are 5.56 million farm/holdings covering 7.19 million hectares which translate to an average area of 1.29 hectares per farm (PSA,2015). This in turn can be a good indication of adequate space for provision for possible farm tourism activities.

Table 2. Distribution of Farms According to Size

Measurement in Square Meters	Frequency	Percent
10,000 below	4	11.1
10,001-20,000	4	11.1
20,001-30,000	14	38.9
30,001-40,000	5	13.9
40,001-50,000	4	11.1
50,001-60,000	4	11.1
60,001-70,000	1	2.8
Total	36	100

Table 3 shows that most of the farms in the town of Hermosa have varying harvest seasons or do not consider the season at all. This is probably because most farmers are practicing intercropping to produce more yield and to compensate for the interval in between harvesting rice grains that has a longer growing period. This could be a good practice in consideration of the possibility of farm tourism, thus harvesting could be expected all year round. As stated by Gayo, 2011 that Agritourism "rural experiences" to visitors to generate revenues for farmers and surrounding communities which includes activities such as harvesting of produce.

Table 3. Distribution of Farms According to Harvest Season

Month	Frequency	Percent
August-October	1	2.8
May- July	1	2.8
May-July	7	19.4
Varying	27	75
Total	36	100

Table 4 reveals that almost all the farms in the study are privately owned and managed. This can be a good factor for prospective farms to consider opening their farm gates for farm tourism activities since owning the property may provide more liberty for them to decide on their own without having to go through several procedures. As highlighted by TMC Financing, 2019, the benefits to owning over leasing are plentiful. By owning the property, not only serves as a long-term investment lowering taxable income at the same time, space is for the owner to customize.

Table 4. Distribution of Farms According to Type of Ownership

Ownership	Frequency	Percent
Privately Owned/Managed/Leased	34	94.4
Local Government Owned	0	0
Under CARP or CARPable	0	0
With tenants/ Residents	0	0
Ancestral Domain/ Land Claimants	2	5.6
Total	36	100

Table 5 presents the type of methodology used in farming, showing that almost all of them are into traditional farming. This is probably because of the limitation's farmers in the local community's experience with access to

modern methods in agriculture. Traditional Farming is an essential aspect of the farm tourism experience and promotion of sustainability. In a case study conducted by Ba, Q., 2018 in Taiwan, findings showed that traditional farming was adaptable to climate change in keeping with local capacity and might be the key to the slow loss of agricultural lands in the Wutai Village.

Table 5. Distribution of Farms According to Type of Methodology Used

Type of Farming	Frequency	Percent
Traditional Farming	35	97.2
Organic Farming	1	2.8
Total	36	100

Table 6 shows that most of the farms are accessible all-year-round and with available public transportation. This is a very vital factor for farmers to deliver their goods to the markets and other selling stations. However, there are still several farms that do not have paved roads for their farms to be easily accessed. There are public transportations for lease on special contracted rates and are not on a regular route. This could be an opportunity for the areas to be granted with farm to market roads as one of the mandates of the Department of Agriculture to provide better opportunities to farmers and fisherfolk by increasing production at lower costs, thereby increasing the farmer's income and making food more affordable to the general public (Department of Agriculture Administrative Order 4 Series of 2016).

Table 6. Distribution of Farms According to Accessibility

Accessibility	Responses		
	N	Percent	Percent of Cases
Accessibility All-year-round	29	51.8%	93.5%
Availability of Public Transportation	27	48.2%	87.1%
Total	56	100.0%	180.6%

*Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Table 7 shows the basic utilities present in the farm where clean water is mostly available. Followed by the availability of power supply in the area and availability of communication capability though some areas would have weaker signals compared to others. Drainage systems are not widely available due to the unavailability of comfort rooms in the area. This is probably because most of the farmers visit and work on the farm daily but do not stay on the farms. It can also be noted that most of the farms have no Solid Waste Disposal Site though however, though there is no actual facility or disposal Site they each have their ways of managing wastes in the farm.

Table 7. Distribution of Farms According to Amenities

Basic Utilities	Responses		
	N	Percent	Percent of Cases
Clean Water	30	27.5%	90.9%
Power Supply	27	24.8%	81.8%
Communication	25	22.9%	75.8%
Drainage/Sewerage	17	15.6%	51.5%
Solid Waste Disposal Site	10	9.2%	30.3%
Total	109	100.0%	330.3%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Table 8 presents the available attractions in the farm area. It can be seen that Festivals and Culinary Experiences are the two Historical and Cultural activities done in the area. Concerning the festivals, these refer to the patron saint feasts celebrated in the area. All of the responses were from the town of Culis sitio Nazareno where the feast

of the Black Nazarene is celebrated. This is an observed practice in the Philippines where every town no matter how small or big holds a fiesta, Dela Cruz, (2017).

Table 8. Distribution of Farms According to the Presence of Historical/ Cultural Attractions

Characteristics	Responses		
	N	Percent	Percent of Cases
Built Heritage (50 years or above)	0	0	0
Festivals	11	73.3%	91.7%
Culinary Experience	4	26.7%	33.3%
Museums	0	0	0
Total	15	100.0%	125.0%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Table 9 presents the quality of the farm site's surroundings within a five 5-kilometer radius. It can be observed that the majority of the farms have beautiful vista/ views to boast about. This is probably because most of the farms are located in the upland areas that have a view of the mountains and are surrounded by scenic plantations. This is a good attraction that is sought by many travelers. This complements the study conducted by Universitat Pompeu Fabra – Barcelona (2019) on what mostly attracts tourists to a destination, which includes, landscapes, culture, architecture, gastronomy, events, shopping, etc.

Support services are also within the farm areas which include but are not limited to police stations, fire stations, and barangay halls. All of which are relevant to the comfort of prospective farm tourists in the future.

Table 9. Distribution of Farms According to the Quality of Surroundings

Characteristics	Responses		
	N	Percent	Percent of Cases
Landfill/dumpsite 1 and 5	0	0	0
Mining Site	0	0	0
Presence of Informal Settlers	1	2.3%	3.1%
Presence of Beautiful Vista/ View	26	59.1%	81.3%
Presence of Support Services	17	38.6%	53.1%
Total	44	100.0%	137.5%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Table 10 shows the available onsite facilities in the farm sites. It can be observed that even though a majority of the farms do not have restrooms, accommodations, and food service, most of them have provisions for it; which mean that they have the area in mind as to where the possible facilities may be built if the farm owners decided to open their farm gates to the public. This would in turn be a good source of extra income for them. As Department of Tourism Secretary, Bernadette Romulo- Puyat stated in an interview that farm tourism holds the promise of food sufficiency and additional income for tourism stakeholders including farmers, farmworkers, and fisherfolks (Domingo, 2019).

Table 10. Distribution of Farms According to Onsite Facilities Available in the Farm

Onsite Facility	Frequency	Percentage
Restrooms	Yes	1
	No	13
	w/provision	22
Total	36	100
Accommodation	Yes	1
	No	15
	w/provision	20
Total	36	100
Food Service	Yes	1

	No	19	55.6
	w/provision	16	44.1
Total		36	100

5. Findings and Analysis

This section presents the findings and analysis of the challenges and prospects in the Agricultural Communities in the town of Hermosa. As a result of the thematic analysis of the in-depth interview with the participants, four (4) themes emerged, namely: Inadequacy of resources; fluctuating productivity; vulnerable quality produce, and profit unpredictability with eleven (11) sub-themes that need to be addressed to be able to extend assistance to the farmers in Hermosa and prospects to exploit. It can be noted that some of the themes and their underpinning dimensions may overlap to some degree.

5.1 Overview of Findings

Lack of Capital/ Finances. Like most businesses lack of finances inhibits the development of farmlands in Hermosa. Expansion and farm maintenance as the dry season starts requires more resources. It is with the lack of funds that farmers also exhaust the opportunity to practice intercropping to have an extra income while growing other crops in between.

“Cyempre, dahil nga, karamihan ng mga tao dyan ay mga farmer, wala namang mga malalaking kapital, pang finance para mas ma pabilis ang development ng mga lupa, ng mga magsasaka, kung magtatanim man ng mga fruit bearing trees, every dry seasons kailangan mo additional na financial assistance dahil tubig. Mag pu pump ka ng mga tubig, gagamit ka ng gas or kuryente”, [Of course, because, most of the people there are farmers, there is no big capital, more finance to speed up the development of lands, of farmers, if you plant fruit-bearing trees, every dry season you need additional financial assistance due to water. When you pump water, you use gas or electricity] Farmer 4.

“Apat na buwan, bago mo anihin, eh yung mga gulay gulay na ganyan, 3 days, 5 days, umaani ka, may income ka ng dumadating” [Four months, before you harvest, those vegetables like that, 3 days, 5 days, you harvest, you have income coming] Farmer 3.

“Tulad ko po mam, ginawa ko po, may isang pinitak akong ng gulay dyan, tulad nyan may kamatis ako, ayun nalang ang pinang susuporta”. [Like me ma’am, what I did, I have vegetable there, like that I have a tomato, that's what is used for (financial) support] Farmer 2.

Absence of “Bagsakan” Wholesale Trading Post. A common response of the participants, when asked about the profitability of their farm, is that the product is of high quality but is sold at a much cheaper price because of the overhead expenses, especially on the transportation of the goods to trading posts or *Bagsakan* that are located in a different town.

“Wala mang bagsakan na maramihan na namimili satin. Hindi tulad sa Dinalupihan, halos ang Bataan kumukuha din sila dyan tsaka Olongapo at Zambales” [We have no Bagsakan with plenty of consumer here. Unlike in Dinalupihan, almost (the whole) Bataan also purchase there as well as Olongapo and Zambales] Participant 2.

“Wala po eh, kasi po wala pong organic stall sa palengke, nasa Balanga meron. Pero kung konti lang ang produkto mo, gagamit ka ng oras, gagamit ka nag sasakyan, talo po. kaya kung meron sa malapit baka pwede. Halimbawa sa Savemore o sa palengke, kaso wala po sa Dinalupihan at Hermosa eh” [None, because there is no organic stall in the market, there are some in Balanga. But if you only have a small product, you will use time, you will use a car, you will lose. So, if there is one nearby it might be possible. For example, in Savemore or the market, however, none in Dinalupihan and Hermosa] Participant 1.

“Mura lang nabibili, kasi nga walang area na kamukha nung area na napupuntahan natin sa ibang lugar na Bagsakan Center, yung isang area na lahat ng produkto ng magsasaka dun nila dinadala. Dinadayo ng mga mamimili na mga taga iba- ibang lugar, gaya ng Divisoria, Santa Cruz, yung may malalaking market, panong dadayuhin yun eh walang market” [It is purchased cheaply because there is no area that looks like the area we go to in another area, Bagsakan Center, the one area where all the farmers' products are brought. Consumers from different places, such as Divisoria, Santa Cruz, visit those with large markets, how will it be visited if there is no market] participant 4.

Scarce Farm to Market Roads. One of the challenges faced by farmers in upland areas that inhibit profitability is the amount of money they need to spend not just from tending their crops but the difficulty of delivery of the actual product due to the scarcity of paved roads that could have been their access to the market and the consumers.

“Okay, naman ang ani. Kaya lang ang number one na kailangan ng magsasaka yung access sa road. Eh yung farm to market road, cyempre lumalaki ang ani nila, instead na mapadali,. Mura lang nga lang sana ang byahe, tapos kung ilang transfer yun. Natural, pangit ang daan, sisingilin ka ng mahal eh. Yung sasakyan nila, malakas ang gas ganon.. babawiin nila sayo” [The harvest is okay. That's why the number one need of farmers is road access. the farm to market road, of course, the yield is increasing, instead of making it easier. The trip would have been cheaper, but after all, they would have transfer Naturally, the road is rough, you will be charged more. With their car, they will say that it consumes more gas and they will take it back from you] Participant 1.

“Nalulugi ka, kasi hahakutin ng kabayo, kasi iaakyat mo sa daan, hahakutin sa daan, dadalin sa ganon, para maisakay sa sasakyan. So ang magsasaka, pag minsan na dedepress din, dahil halos walang kinikita. Kagaya ko dati, nagtanim ako ng Piña, 50,000 pieces galing pa ng Cavite, eh mura pa ang Piña” [You are losing money because the horse will pull your goods because you will bring it on the road, it has to be pulled on the road, you will be taken there, to get in the car. So, the farmer, sometimes also gets depressed, because there is almost no income. Like me, I used to plant pineapples, 50,000 pieces from Cavite, Pineapple is still cheap then]. Participants 4.

Government Support. Priority assistance given by the government in Hermosa is seen in two different opposing perspectives as low land farmers perceive it to be adequate and constantly received, upland farmers reckon that prioritization should not just be given in low land farms since they also need the same support being extended.

“Maganda naman ang support ng gobyerno dahil, may libring abono tayo at saka yung binhi” [The government's support is good because we have free fertilizer and then the seeds] Participant 3.

“Okay naman ang binibigay ng gobyerno, kaya lang...ayun nga yung sa ani. Lalo na kapag binagyo” [It's okay what the government gives, however... that's what the harvest is like. Especially when stormy] participant 2.

“Dahil nga dun sa kakulangan din ng suporta ng gobyerno” [Because of the lack of government support]

“Dapat hindi lang naka focus and Department of Agriculture sa Low Land at sa mga farm ng palay. Kasi yan lang ang palaging nabibigyan ng abono eh, eh yung upland, mas nanganailangan din ng abono yan. Pangsuporta sa mga pananim nila, kasi pag bumagyo nasisira din, nagtatanim ulit, wala silang abono” [The Department of Agriculture should not only focus on the Low Land and the rice farms. Because they are the only one that is always given fertilizer, the upland also needs more fertilizer as support for their crops, because when the storm comes it is also destroyed, they plant again, they have no fertilizer] Participant 4.

Natural Causes. Nature can be very generous and forgiving but at times, merciless and vindictive as farmers battle off against odds only to be devastated by yet another unpredictable force. With the probable impact of climate change, farmers are unable to predict the sudden changes in the weather as well, a challenge faced with uncertainty by farmers.

“Minsan okay naman. Minsan naman may down, minsan may maganda naman ang ani.

Ayun nga kapag inabot ka ng kalamidad, talagang yung kita mo wala talaga” [Sometimes it's okay. Sometimes there is down, sometimes there is a good harvest, but then when disaster strikes you, your income is nothing] Participant 3.

“Syempre wala ka na hong magagawa, lalo na kung yung umuulan” [Of course you can do nothing, especially if it rains] Participant 2.

“Sa ngayon dahil pa tag araw. Wala sa ngayon. Ang upland kasi, nagtatanim ng mga gulay during rainy seasons, dahil sa tubig” [So far because it is still summer. None for now. The upland, on the other hand, grows vegetables during rainy seasons, because of water] Participant 4.

Varying Yield. When participants were asked as to how they may describe the productivity in their farms for the last three years, their responses varied in the level of the productivity and profitability of their farms but boils down to a deeply rooted resilience and drive not to stop despite the challenges and small profit margin they needed to bear to continue to strive despite all odds.

“Malungkot po kasi simula po nung binaha kami, napakalaki po ng naging epekto. Back to zero po ako eh, nasira po lahat yan eh. Pati po ito wash out po lahat yan eh, walang natira Nakaikot po ako sa ilog eh. Talagang no choice po dadaanan talaga ng tubig eh” [It is sad because since we were flooded, the effect has been huge. I'm back to zero, it's all shattered. Also, washout, there is nothing left. I'm surrounded by the river. There is no choice for water to pass through]

“Nadala nga ng bagyo kaya recovery nanaman. Laging ganon po. Ang magsasaka naman ganon eh. Rerecover rerecover, pagka ano po nasiraan” [The storm brought it so recovery again. It's always like that. The farmer is like that. Recovery, then, recovery again when something went wrong]. Participant 1

“Meron din namang konting kinikita, hindi naman break even. Kaya lang cyempre hindi ka naman hihinto dahil mawawalan ka ng income. Hindi ganon kaganda ang kitaan dahil nga siguro kung maiaayos lahat yung mga pangangailangan ng magsasaka dun,. Actually, yung financial assistance hindi mo naman maiaasa sa gobyerno yan, compared sa ibang bansa, kaya lang yung mga farm to market road, yun ang talagang kailangan” [There is also a small income, not just break even. That's why of course you will not stop because you will lose income. The income is not that good because; maybe if all the needs of the farmers are fixed. Actually, you cannot rely in the financial assistance from the government, compared to other countries, however, the farm to market roads, that is what is really needed]. Participant 4

5.2 Productivity

Harvesting All-Year-Round. Participants in their quest to stay afloat in business and somehow manage to earn a profit from farming against challenges brought by natural causes and capitalist traders managed to strategize and grab every means to earn a profit.

“Kasi kung aasa ka lang sa bukid, 3 months 4 months kang maghihintay. Kahit papano wala kang income, makaka utang ka sa mga patubuan, kaya ang ginagawa namin, tulad nyan, umaga, nagpapapawis ka sa bukid mo sa gulay, 45days to 50 days may harvest ka na” [Because if you just depend on the farm, you will wait 3 months 4 months. No matter how you will have no income, you can borrow from lenders with interest, so what we do, like that, in the morning, you sweat on your vegetable farm, 45 days to 50 days you have a harvest already]. Participant 2.

Quality Produce. When participants were asked about the quality of the produce they grow on their farms, they responded with uttered praise that the harvest is good and is comparable to produce from other provinces which are known for that crop. They have attributed the quality of their products to the excellence of the soil in the farm for both low and uplands.

“Wala pong problema, maganda po yung ani dito. Lalo na yung lupa dito hindi cya mahirap trabahuin, maganda pa yung lupa nya, maganda din ang patubig, basta may water pump ka” [No problem, the harvest here is good. Especially the soil here is not difficult to work with, the soil is still good, the irrigation is also good, as long as you have a water pump].

“Magaganda yung mga produkto natin. Kagaya ng lansones. Yung lansones dyan, pinepeke na ngalang ng mga taga rito, pinalalabas nila, ani ng Laguna. Dinadala sa iba't ibang palengke, pero ang totoo, dito naggagaling yang lansones natin. Kasi yung lansones natin, galing din ng Laguna at Batangas yung mga tao natin dyan. Kaya lang ang tao kasi, set-up ng isip nila na pag sinabi mong Laguna galing ang lansones, mas gusto nila kasi akala nila mas matamis, pero ang totoo, dito rin nanggagaling yan., Kung yung Piña natin, oh na discover yung Piña ng Sumalo, dahil maraming nagtatanim dyan, isa sa pinaka matamis na prutas, comapared sa Cavite at Batangas. Dahil yung lupa natin dito hindi pa masyadong gamit na gamit, hindi pa sobra sobra ang abono yung nutrients nya maganda, kaya yung quality ng piña maganda” [Our products are good. Like lansones. Those lansones there, people are faking it here, they release them and say its from Laguna. They are taken to different markets, but the truth is, this is our lansones. Because our people there are also from Laguna and Batangas. It's just because people (consumers), set-up their minds that when you say the lansones is from Laguna, they prefer it because they think it's sweeter, but the truth is, it comes from here. Even our Pineapple from Sumalo was discovered, because there are many growers there, one of the sweetest fruits, coma pared in Cavite and Batangas. Because our soil here is not very well used, the fertilizer is not too much, its nutrients are good, so the quality of the pineapple is good] Participant 4.

Destructive Pest and Viruses. One of the common challenges faced by farmers in Hermosa is pests that include insects, viruses, and fungi that greatly affect their productivity. Over time, by practice and experience farmers were able to come up with strategies on how to avoid and prevent them though failing is inevitable.

“Ang number one po kasi sa pag hahalaman ngayon, yung sobrang aktibo po ang virus”. [The number one thing about gardening today is that the virus is very active] Participant 1.

“Ngayon, pagka humarvest, halos sabay sabay din sila, kasi pag nauna ka, minsan nasisira, napepeste ganon. Dahil walang nakatanim, sayo lahat pumupunta ang mga peste. Kaya ganon ang ginagawa ng mga tao” [Now, when they harvest, they are almost at the same time, because when you go first, sometimes it gets damaged. Because no one around planted, pests will all come to you. So that's what people do] Participant 2.

Pinned to the Traders Price. Due to the farmers' limited resources and availability of a trading post in the town, most farmers would give in to the prices set by traders visiting their farms to purchase produce. They were left with no choice instead of spending too much to transport their products somewhere else.

“Eh dadating dito ang namimili dala dala nila ang presyo nila. Syempre wala ka na hong magagawa, lalo na kung yung umuulan, ibebenta mon a ng basa” [Eh the buyers will come here with their price. Of course, you have nothing to do, especially if it rains, you will sell (your harvest) wet] Participant 2.

6. Conclusions

Based on the results of the study the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Most of the farms with the highest potential to be a farm tourism destination in Hermosa are located in the upland areas, mostly privately owned ranging from 1 to 4 hectares in size. There are variable harvest seasons all-year-round in almost all of the farms with a variety of produce cultivated and harvested in a traditional way of farming. This is an open opportunity for farm tourism activities that may be enjoyed by farm tourists.
2. Farms are accessible any time of the year by land transportation on a regular or contracted trip. However, there are farm areas that are deep into the mountains that cannot be accessed via paved roads. A prospective adventure farm trip or trekking when explored intensely.
3. It can be reckoned that most of the farms have minimal access to basic utilities and amenities, nevertheless provision for installation cannot be ruled out. Some of the farm sites are located in areas where festivals are held and have culinary distinctiveness, free from landfills and mining sites with beautiful vista/ views to boast for, along with the presence of support services in a few areas.
4. Challenges faced by farmers in the town of Hermosa can be summed up in four (4) major concerns namely: (1) Inadequacy of Resources; as farmers lack capitalization bound farmers to maximize farmland potential. (2) Fluctuating Productivity; despite the farmers' efforts to strategize with intercropping and have alternating harvests, all-year-round, inevitable external environmental forces may still suddenly interfere. (3) The vulnerability of the Quality of Produce; despite the promising start, each farmer takes on the onset, threats of destruction from uncontrollable factors happen. (4) Profit Unpredictability; given the number of challenges faced by farmers to get a hold of the actual produce, trading is a whole new playing field Farmers ought to be defeated by capitalist traders.
5. It can be concluded that farmers in the town of Hermosa have limited knowledge of the potential of their property to be developed and commercialized into an Agro/ Farm Tourism Destination and no initial action has been initiated by the local and provincial tourism office to seize this opportunity.

7. Recommendations

Based on the Research Results and Conclusions the following are recommended:

1. It is recommended that BPSU Tourism Management Department foster collaboration with the Municipality of Hermosa to further explore the potential of its farm sites for Agro-Tourism Development.
2. The local government of Hermosa must acknowledge the need of the farmers in the upland areas for basic utilities and access roads by funding construction, if not by merely endorsing the need to the national government for added support.
3. The Municipal Agricultural Office of Hermosa must intensify its support to their local farmers to address the challenges they constantly experience and extend their resources to mitigate the risks farmers confront in trading their produce.
4. It is likewise recommended that BPSU Extension Services Office facilitate an extension program for the Hermosa Farmers which would compose of the following training/ seminars: (1)Tourism Management Department on farm tourism concept and management;(2) Agriculture Program for technical assistance on crop management for tourism; (3)Psychology Program to address the stress, pressure and mental health of farmers;(4) Business Management Program for negotiations and trading techniques; (5) College of Engineering and Architecture for Irrigation engineering and innovations.
5. For future researchers to take the results of the study as baseline data to further explore and aid the challenges faced by farmers with the use of their expertise, technology, and innovations with sustainability as its core value.

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