

Philippines stakeholders are charting the future of digital agriculture, says IRRI

10 June 2024 | News

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The International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) headquarters in Los Baños, Laguna became a hub of digital agricultural innovation as it hosted the Philippine leg of the highly anticipated ICTforAg 2024. This year's theme, "Localizing Impact through Inclusion, Inspiration, and Innovation," underscored the need to tailor digital solutions to local agricultural landscapes' unique challenges and opportunities.

Co-hosted by the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) and the Department of Agriculture Agricultural Training Institute (DA-ATI), ICTforAg kicked off with an opening program where Dr. Yvonne Pinto, IRRI Director General warmly welcomed the participants, and highlighted IRRI's commitment to driving digital innovation in the sector "Together, we are leveraging information and communication technologies to drive transformative change in the agriculture sector," she stated.

The event, attended by a diverse mix of policymakers, researchers, farmers, and technology enthusiasts, showcased the intersection of agriculture and technology in the Philippines. An exhibit viewing session also commenced where attendees explored cutting-edge technologies and initiatives that promise to transform agriculture.

The keynote address, delivered by Engr. Christopher Morales, DA Undersecretary for Rice Industry Development, discussed the government's efforts to integrate digital tools into rice farming practices.

“As we look to the future, we envision a Philippine agriculture sector where digital technologies are a cornerstone of our national growth. However, this journey cannot be without challenges, and we must address issues such as digital literacy among farmers, infrastructure limitations, and data security,” said Usec. Christopher Morales.

In the face of climate change and fluctuating market prices, a shift to a more digital landscape in the agriculture sector can highly benefit farmers. In the Philippines, high labor costs are key factors in the country's lower rice production efficiency. To remain competitive, farmers can adopt ICT tools such as satellite remote sensing, drone mapping, and digital literacy programs. These technologies can boost yields, enhance productivity, and ensure food security.

Through several breakout sessions and plenary talks, ICTforAg delved into these various innovative projects and programs revolutionizing agriculture in the Philippines. Topics like linking producers and consumers through digital platforms, data-driven decision-making, and the digital agriculture landscape in the Philippines, highlighting tools like [D4AgPH](#) and the [Global Market Intelligence Platform \(GloMIP\)](#), showcased innovative applications of precision spraying using vision-based velocity estimation.