



WINROCK
INTERNATIONAL

LOBSTER GROWERS IN SURIGAO GAIN HIGHER INCOME WITH POST-HARVEST TECHNOLOGY



PHILIPPINE COLD CHAIN PROJECT

Improving Lives and Livelihoods Worldwide



Merry monitors the growth of her lobsters using technology she learned from PCCP.

Meriflor "Merry" Lepio is one of the many residents in the village of Baybay in Surigao City engaged in lobster growing as their main source of livelihood. For five years now, she and her family had been tending to their small lobster culture business. But earnings were low and there was not enough capital to continue their enterprise. She had had to rely on financiers to fund her business. "In my eagerness to manage and finance my own lobster venture, I decided to get a salary loan from a microcredit institution in

Surigao City." Using the loan, they bought and managed a hundred pieces of lobster fry amounting to 30,000 pesos (\$680 US dollars). High mortality of the lobsters and financial difficulties, as well as high interest of the loan, however, kept Merry in deep debt.

In 2014, Merry's family became one of the partner family beneficiaries of Winrock International's United States Department of Agriculture-funded Philippine Cold Chain Project (PCCP). Merry said that during a community entry activity, she was happy to hear from Winrock staff that they will be implementing the project in their barangay and will focus on specific commodities like culturing and proper handling of high value aquamarine products including lobsters. Merry actively participated in all project activities. She completed all the trainings including Pre-Membership Education Seminar, Technology Training on Lobster and Grouper Production and Agribusiness Planning. She even attended an Aquaculture Forum facilitated by PCCP and partner SEAFDEC which was held in Butuan City September 8-9, 2014.

"I've acquired a lot of knowledge out of the trainings I attended" she added. "Specifically, I applied what I learned from the technology training on lobster and grouper production during our 2nd harvest of our own self-financed and managed lobster culture," she said. Merry was amazed with the techniques she learned and applied it to her business. "I didn't know that the pseudo stem of the banana plant can be used for packing the marketable size lobster. This was demonstrated by the resource person during the training. We also learned that the most applicable for us in island barangays is to use styrofoam boxes containing ice to prevent damage of the market-ready lobster during transportation. The purpose of ice is to calm the lobster, with a regulated temperature of 15-20 degrees centigrade. Through this post-harvest technology, the mortality and costs decreased. In addition, unlike what we did before, I learned that it is advisable not to feed the lobster within 24 hours before harvesting and to condition it in an aerated holding tank before packing," Merry added.

By applying the post-harvest technology she learned, Merry's income increased because all her lobsters were sold alive. "I achieved zero mortality on harvest time, unlike before when the mortality of the harvest reached up to 3 pieces or about 2.1 kilos. With a farmgate price of P2,200 per kilo, this was a loss of around 4,620.00 pesos! Without losses, I now have more income."

As a member of a PCCP supported group, Merry recently received loan releases for lobster fry, nets and ropes. She applied the desirable stocking density of ten pieces of lobsters in every one cubic meter of lobster cage for her lobsters. With higher income, she now owns a pump boat and employs two caretakers for her growing lobsters which has reached 400 pieces. Merry says "I am indeed very happy being part of the project!" **Philip Pa-as/ Philippine Cold Chain Project.**



Merry with her 2 children.

Winrock International is a nonprofit organization that works with people in the United States and around the world to empower the disadvantaged, increase economic opportunity, and sustain natural resources.



WINROCK
INTERNATIONAL

Project Management Office

2F Rudy Tiu II Building J.C. Aquino Avenue | Butuan City | Agusan del Norte
Tel.: (085) 342-0837 Fax : (085) 815-0293

www.winrockpccp.org | helpdesk@winrockpccp.org

© 2015 All Rights Reserved