

COOPERATIVES ALL OVER THE COUNTRY GOING THE EXTRA MILE TO SERVE THEIR MEMBERS AND COMMUNITIES AMIDST COVID-19 PANDEMIC: REPORTS FROM **REGION 5**

#CoopsAgainstCOVID19

44 BICOL COOPERATIVES STILL ON THE GO DESPITE THE COVID LOCKDOWN

The ongoing national health emergency and lockdown enforced all over Luzon did not stop many cooperatives in Bicol from serving their members. Several of them extended help to the frontline workers and other people while adhering to physical distancing, quarantining, disinfecting materials, frequent washing of hands, and other health guidelines from authorities.

Twelve cooperatives each from Albay and Camarines Sur, nine from Sorsogon, seven from Catanduanes, three from Camarines Norte, and one from Masbate remained open to provide members' and communities' needs.

The Albay-based cooperatives that provided land transportation were Legazpi Sorsogon UV Express TSC (LESOUVETTRASCO), Bicol Intercity Transport Coop, Ligao Utility Vehicle Express Transport Service Cooperative (LUVETSC), Polangui-Legazpi UV Transport Cooperative (POLUVTRASCO), and Bicol Airport UV Transport Service Cooperative. The Bicol Airport UV Transport Service Cooperative served only the front liners of Legazpi City.

The gasoline station of the LACE Multi-Purpose Cooperative continued selling fuel in Ligao City.

Consumer goods were sold by the Tabaco Ambulant Vendors Consumers Cooperative, Tiwi Indigenous People Asenso Consumers Cooperative, and 1st Consumers Coop of Cawayan.



Figure 1. 1st Consumers Coop of Cawayan, Manito, Albay. (photo provided by CDS II Myrlin Botin)

Milk was produced continuously by the Albay Dairy Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative in the town of Camalig. The Grupong Magkakarne kan Daraga Albay Multi-Purpose Cooperative kept operating the slaughterhouse to ensure adequate meat supply for residents.

The MMG-Albay Multi-Purpose Cooperative in Tabaco City was duty-bound to open 24/7 because of its hospital.

In the adjacent province of Camarines Sur, 12 cooperatives also remained in operation. Majority were engaged in palay and rice production, farm irrigation, post-harvest facilities, food processing (rice coffee and meat), and farm inputs supply. These were San Antonio Farmers Irrigators Multi-Purpose Cooperative, Lirag Agrarian Reform Farmers Beneficiaries Cooperative, Pecuaría Development Cooperative, San Agustin-San Ramon Farmers Cooperative, Malansad Danawan Bagadion San Vicente Tinanquihan Agriculture Cooperative (MADABAST AGRI COOP), Nabua West Multi-Purpose Cooperative, and Camsur MPC. The Camsur Multi-Purpose Cooperative partnered with the Department of Agriculture Regional Field Unit 5 to operate the KADIWA rolling store. The scheme utilized ICT technology to deliver food and grocery goods at the door steps of buyers who ordered online via their cellphones.



Figure 2. Camsur MPC KADIWA Store delivered goods ordered online. (photo by

The Golden Parauma Producers Cooperative in Pamplona town continued growing vegetables and sold these to residents.

Two other cooperatives, BMC G110 Multi-Purpose Cooperative and Federation of Baao Women (FBW) Multi-Purpose Cooperative kept open their consumer stores. The former, based inside the Bicol Medical Center in Naga City, also operated a canteen.

The Delnasip Transport Cooperative, based in Sipocot town, continued plying its route. The needed potable water by residents of Buhi town was supplied by Buhi Rural Waterworks and Sanitation Multi-Purpose Cooperative.

At the southernmost tip of Luzon Island, nine cooperatives continued operating in Sorsogon. The Bulusan Transport Cooperative, Gubat Transport Cooperative, and Barcelona Gubat Sorsogon Transport Cooperative plied their respective routes.

Both the Salvacion Farmers Development Cooperative (SAFADECO) and the Barcelona Development Cooperative continued to operate their consumer stores. The SAFADECO added convenience to consumers by accepting orders online and then delivering the goods at the door steps of customers. The Bangate Multi-Purpose Cooperative sold rice in the town of Barcelona. The Barcelona Water Service Development Cooperative kept potable water flowing into the faucets of consumers.

In the island province of Catanduanes, seven cooperatives served members and residents. The consumer stores of the following cooperatives remained serving the customers: Comagaycay ISLA Consumers Cooperative (CISCCO), Batong Paloway Agrarian Reform Cooperative (BAPARCO), Catandaunes Multipurpose Cooperative (CMPC), Catandaunes State University Multipurpose Cooperative (CSU-MPC), and EBMC Multipurpose Cooperative. The CISCCO operated 24/7. Both the CSU-MPC and EBMC MPC continued their catering services.

The HAPITRANSCO continued serving its route. On a limited scale due to existing restrictions, the Catandaunes Ports Arrastre and Stevedoring Services Cooperative (CPASCO) maintained its presence at the Port of Virac. CPASCO also donated packed meals to personnel manning the checkpoints established by the Philippine National Police, Local Government Unit, and Philippine Coast Guard.



Figure 3. CPASCO donated food packs to frontliners at the checkpoints. (photo provided by CDS II Ophar Dy)

Three cooperatives continued operating in Camarines Norte. The Basud Development Cooperative and the Jose Panganiban National High School Multipurpose Cooperative operated their consumer stores. The water refilling station of the latter also remained open for service.

Labo Progressive MP Cooperative continued their production of food items from pineapple. This ensured farmers that their produce will be utilized and not go to waste. The production plant continued to be useful and the factory workers continued to earn income during the lockdown.

In another island province, the Masbate Medical Mission Group Hospital Service Cooperative also operated 24/7 to provide hospital and health services to everyone in need of medical attention. (from reports of Field personnel of CDA Naga & FB)