

## **Seaweed Culture as a Livelihood Source: A Case in Barangay Bato, Sta. Cruz, Davao del Sur**

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### **ABSTRACT**

As an offshoot of the Technology Innovation, Promotion, and Commercialization Program (TIPCP) initiated by Land Bank of the Philippines and DOST–XI, this study was conducted to feature actual seaweed culture practices in barangay Bato, Sta. Cruz, Davao del Sur. This initiative may be a way to provide inputs for the development of strategies for greater seaweed production. Specifically, the study aims to identify variations in culture practices, determine production, and provide venue for extending assistance to seaweed growers. Purposive sampling was done and 73% of the actual seaweed growers in the site were interviewed. Results show that most culture practices of seaweed growers in the study site vary from the recommended ones. Volume of seaweed production, as declared by the respondents, is slightly low but not quite far from the values recorded for the seaweed farms in Western Mindanao. It was worth note taking that more than half of the seaweed growers in barangay Bato finance the farms they operate and the rest are assisted by buyers. This may call for a need of a sound financing scheme by funding institutions. Similarly, the low production, in terms of volume and income, may also be an important concern wherein interventions for technical assistance and marketing strategy have to be pursued.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Seaweeds are recognized as important fishery resource in the Philippines because of their economic uses as food and as items of trade or as source of livelihood (Trono & Fortes, 1988). Seaweed farming has been one of the top foreign exchange earner for the country. In 2001, the Philippines is the third major seaweed producer in the world, after China and Korea (Hurtado, 2003) The phycocolloids (e.g. agar, algin, carrageenan), derived from different species of seaweed, are utilized in food and pharmaceutical products. This contributed much to seaweed classification as an export commodity. In fact, it is categorized by the DOST-STAND as an “export winner”.

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