

# Aspiring farmers urged to embrace technology

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SAN RAFAEL, Bulacan – Crop experts are encouraging would-be farmers to engage in technological innovations to make crop production more profitable.

During the Innovation Olympics 2018 at the Catalina Hall of 8 Wares Resorts, EastWest Seeds Philippines general manager Henk Hermans said farmers represent the second poorest sector in the Philippines.

“This sad reality results in our young people’s disenchantment of pursuing a career in agriculture,” Hermans said.

Noting that the average age of Filipino farmers is 57–59 years old, Hermans said there is a great need to encourage the youth to engage in crop production to ensure the country’s food security.

He said farming practices in the Philippines are outdated and majority of the farmers are reluctant to use modern technology in farming, making their work labor intensive and unsustainable.

Hermans believes there is money in vegetable farming and it could be a solid route in improving the lives of the farmers.

He added that through the Innovation Olympics, they could harness the minds of the youth to come up with their own innovative technological intervention.

By encouraging students from different multiple backgrounds to come up with sustainable solutions to improve productivity in vegetable farming, the youth can effectively address two major farming concerns – the integration of technological innovations to improve vegetable production and inspiring the youth to consider farming as a professional goal.

For his part, UPLB Center for Technology Entrepreneurship executive director Glenn Baticados said agriculture today is more than just a farmer simply planting a crop, growing livestock, or catching a fish.

“It takes an ecosystem and several actors to work together to produce and deliver the food we need. It is this dynamic and complex ecosystem that will equip agriculture to cope with the competing challenges of addressing food safety and food security, creating inclusive livelihoods, mitigating climate change and sustainably managing natural resources,” he said.

Baticados said “advances in agri-biotechnology and farming practices and methods have enabled farmers to become more productive.

“The future challenges facing agriculture will require us to work together and to innovate continuously. We need to broaden and deepen our collaboration in research and development to meet these challenges,” he said.