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A PILOT PROJECT FOR THE COMMERCIAL UTILIZATION OF CASSAVA  
AS AN ANIMAL FEED IN THE PHILIPPINESG. R. Gerona<sup>1/</sup>

In order to solve the problem of continuously importing yellow corn principally as energy source in animal feeds to sustain its growing swine and poultry industry, the Philippines has initiated a pilot project on the commercial utilization of root crop based formulations in animal feeds. The project is spearheaded by the Philippine Root Crops Research and Training Center of the Visayas State College of Agriculture (VISCA), Baybay, Leyte, with some financial support from the Philippine Council for Agriculture and Resources Research and Development.

The pilot project has three main features: 1) the Feed Mill whose main activity is the commercial production and marketing of root crop-based feed formulations and to make available cheap and high quality

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root crop-based feeds to local small raisers; 2) Research and Development - to test and develop technology in support to the activity of the Feed Mill. This is a very important component of the pilot project before any formulations could be produced commercially. Whenever possible the trials are simultaneously conducted at the research station (VISCA) and at the farm level. In this manner, the degree of confidence on the results of the trials is further enhanced; and, 3) the Extension/Expansion - to train and organize farmers on the production and processing of root crops particularly on cassava. The farmers are marketing their produce in the form of dried chips with about 12 to 14% moisture. The project emphasizes the training of farmers within the service area of existing feed mills to assure them of the market and to also solve the difficulty and additional costs of transporting their produce. To the feed miller, the project provides them with technical assistance in the formulation of root crop-based feeds. This may be done through individual visits or group consultations. In the latter, the dialogue includes representative of the root crop farmers.

The providing of technical assistance to feed millers started only in November 1984. On the other hand, the training and organizing of farmers started as early as in February 1984, when the Pilot Feed Mill located at VISCA became operational. Then it started commercially producing root crop-based formulations in May 1984 when farmers started delivering dried chips. These rations are: hog grower and hog finisher of which corn is completely replaced by cassava, and broiler starter with cassava replacing 50% of the corn. Hog and poultry rations will normally contain 50% corn by weight. On the other hand, layer mash with cassava

replacing 50% of the corn in the ration is now being produced by the Pilot Feed Mill on a limited scale because the experiments (2 trials) with SCWL layers are still underway. However, the performance of the experimental birds given with 50% cassava as replacement to corn in the diet looks promising and compares well with the performance of layers given with 100% corn-based diet after 3 to 4 months of laying.

During the past year the Pilot Feed Mill was producing about 300 bags (50 kg/bag) monthly of cassava-based rations with plans to increase production to about 1000 bags monthly in order to be able to cope up with the increasing local demand of cheap and high quality root crop-based feeds. The development of the technology on the formulation of root-crop based feeds coupled with the problems of lack of foreign exchange to import yellow corn and the inability of the country to produce enough corn both for the human and animal populations have resulted in an immediate increase in the demand for root crop chips for animal feeds. This present state of development in the utilization of root crops for animal feeds looks promising to both the animal and root crop industries in the Philippines. In fact the most pressing problem now is producing enough root crop particularly cassava and its postharvest processing to meet the needs of the animal industry.