

In October 2007 Rosalie Ellasus (San Jacinto, Pangasinan. Luzon) became the first Filipino to receive the Kleckner Trade and Technology Advancement Award given by the Truth About Trade and Technology (TATT) in Des Moines City, Iowa, USA.

"For years, I was an Overseas Filipino Worker in Canada and in Singapore. When my husband died, I went back home and tried to work in an office, but my salary was not as much as when I was working in Singapore.

Although, I had zero knowledge on farming, I bought 1.3 ha of rice and corn land, and put up a small piggery. My first exposure to farming was in 2000, when I attended a "Kasakalikahan Farmers Field School" offered by our government. Here I was taught the use of Trichogramma, and all the basics of organic farming. Every morning, I would bring a cup of coffee, and go to the cornfield to monitor pests: corn borer, armyworm, weeds, etc. It was tedious and labor-intensive. Despite the daily pest monitoring, my corn plants were still attacked and damaged by corn borer.

In 2002, I visited a Bt corn field trial and was impressed with the clean leaves and ears because these were not attacked by corn borer. I immediately volunteered my land to become a demonstration site for Bt corn. In 2003, I planted Bt corn and after that, many of the farmers in my place also switched to planting Bt corn when they saw that the Bt corn plant was not infected by corn borer.

Today, I have increased my corn yield, from 3.2 metric tons, with traditional corn variety, to 7.8 metric tons with Bt corn variety. I get almost 100 percent profits with Bt corn, that is why I was able to increase my farm from 1.3 ha to 10 ha at present and send my children to school. I have also adopted another biotech corn which is tolerant to glyphosate. The farmers in my small community enjoy the benefits from planting biotech crops. We get better yields and good buying price of our clean corn from feed millers. What we need is government assistance for postharvest facilities. By sharing my story with other farmers in the world, I hope I can help create positive impact on their quest for better life by adopting innovative farming technologies like biotech crops."