

**PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OPERATIONS OFFICE
NEWS AND INFORMATION BUREAU**

**CABINET REPORT SA TELERADYO – THE NEW NORMAL
HOSTED BY PCOO SECRETARY MARTIN ANDANAR
OCTOBER 9, 2020**

SEC. ANDANAR: Ang pag-uusapan natin – warning lang – medyo nakakagutom, nakaka-miss. Nakakagutom dahil malamang maaalala natin ang ilang paborito nating kainin; nakaka-miss dahil malamang mababalik tayo sa ating kabataan.

Ang topic po natin ay tungkol sa mga flavors at ingredients na galing sa mga inaani natin. Ang episode na ito ay may kuwento.

Kamakailan napag-usapan natin sa Network Briefing News ang plano ni Davao de Oro Governor Jayvee Tyron Uy, ang plano niyang magpatanim ng ‘Adlai.’ Naintriga tayo sa Adlai na parang bigas pero sinasabing mas masustansiya at tinatawag ngang ‘super food’. Noong kinausap ng Radyo Pilipinas ang Department of Agriculture, ibinahagi nila na ang Adlai ay nasa listahan ng ‘Ark of Taste’ – mga pagkain, panlasa at paraan ng pagluto na gustong mapanatili ng International Slow Food Movement para sa kabataan at sa mga darating pang henerasyon.

Kaya ngayong gabi, kakausapin natin mula sa Italy ang kinatawan ng Slow Food at Ark of Taste at mula sa Pilipinas ang Slow Food Youth Network Country Head Chef Jam Melchor at si Department of Agriculture Assistant Secretary for Agri-Business Kristine Evangelista tungkol sa The Ark of Taste, saving indigenous Filipino flavors and ingredients.

Ito po si Communications Secretary Martin Andanar, welcome to Cabinet Report.

SEC. ANDANAR: Welcome back to the Cabinet Report. Ang ating kuwentuhan ngayong gabi ay magsisimula sa Italya kung saan nakabase ang global non-profit organization na Slow Food na siyang nagsimula nitong listahan ng Ark of Taste. Kausapin po natin ang kinatawan nilang si Elena Aniere. Please tell us about Slow Food.

REGIONAL DIRECTOR ANIERE: Slow Food started in Italy. We’re not a profitable organization but we’re very much more than anything else because everybody eats. And it started in Italy in mid ‘80s and due to a global change that was taking place in Italy with the starting up—or the idea of a starting up with McDonalds in Rome. At the same time where Slow Food started and still at today in Bra, in Northern Italy; there was also the winemakers of the Langhe that were going into the international market. We’re trying to compete against an international market.

So they were trigger—so there was this international industrialized food, fast food coming in to Italy and at the same time small scale producers we're trying to provide an industrialized product that have never been there in the past. Carlo Petrini trainee who was a food writer activist, food connoisseur, wine connoisseur based in Bra saw these things and envisioned the potential that Italy was going to lose its food culture which also meant its food cuisine culture which also had impact on a small scale farmer.

So with that, he saw that... in that scenario there was a threat or a risk of industrialized food or what was referred to as fast food have an impact on food culture in Italy but also the culture in general. So he and his friends had conversations, talked about it, philosophized about it and they said 'well fast food is creating change in our environment, in our culture. So what can we do to resist this or prevent this from happening or what can we do to safeguard our culture in our food and our wine and our farmers.'

So what they said is that they would create an organization or movement called fast cultural food which is in contrast to fast food. From that, it started in Italy. They setup membership, they setup association, people got involved. It was very much about people eating and maintaining the consumption side of things.

When farmers came into Italy for tours, they saw these initiatives that were taking place and then became involved in Slow Food that was still based in Italy.

Within 3 years of Slow Food starting in Italy, it became an international movement. From that day in 1989 and it's developed into an international movement that's in 160 countries and we have various initiatives from bio-diversity projects to those markets to shift alliances and working with over a hundred thousand members. But now we've got over 2,500 communities around the world and we're moving into a new phase of evolution and that incorporates communities which are groups of farmers, people that want to change the food system.

Because in 2004 we had an event called Terra Madre. And Terra Madre changed the face of Slow Food. It meant it wasn't just about consumers, it actually brought the farmers into the scenario and the conversation. So with that, where we're at today is an evolution of looking at a sustainable food production and consumption model as such. That starts from the farm to the table or to the fork depending on how we want to use that and involving everybody in that scenario about the food process that we actually make.

So Slow Food refers to good, clean and fair and one that is good for you and it's good for the planet—sorry, it's good for you, it's good for our health. And food is clean, it's clean for the environment and it's clean to eat and fair that it produces a paid and fair prices and consumers pay a fair price. So there's a fair interchange between food – meaning that people pay a true cost for food which is not necessary the situation in industrial food system.

SEC. ANDANAR: Slow Food has a wonderful initiative called Ark of Taste which I understand to recall the biblical Noah's Ark and which seeks to preserve local food, flavors and cuisine. What does Ark of Taste do to achieve this?

REGIONAL DIRECTOR ANIERE: Ark of Taste is basically a catalogue. It's a catalogue of foods or products that at risk of becoming extinct or forgotten or being replaced by industrial food from another country or genetically not used anymore and... So the idea is to firstly to remember what foods we may have eaten in our memory. I know I have of a memory of a food that we—I'm stricken.

We know that—in Australia we have tomatoes. Okay. They're round, they're red; you cut them and you use it in a salad, okay. We think that they have a flavor but the flavor is more water than actual flavor. When I first came to Italy, I actually tasted their tomato and it was red. It wasn't round but it was red and it had an intense flavor that I never had forgotten, okay. My memory of a tomato in Australia is something different. So what we ask people is to actually start remembering food as they're young.

With that, the Ark of Taste, it might be those foods are not eaten anymore. So those foods are replaced by something else or there's a substitute that is easier and more convenient, costless.

So basically what we start to do is to identify those products that exists, we ask people to be involved to nominate them as Ark of Taste products. So it highlights that around the world the products are actually being lost or forgotten or not being used anymore. From that, we then ask people to actually start taking action.

Okay. So you invite them to find a product. We then look at drawing attention not only to my food culture but to everybody that the products, the foods that are being lost around the world. And if we had a map of the world to highlight every product that was being lost because of being identified around the world, we would look at Earth Hour and the whole world would be lit up. Okay, the direction that we're going, those lights don't exist anymore, so the whole world is dark.

Okay. With that, after we've drawn attention to it we're looking at agriculture biodiversity that links to a culture, that links to a cuisine that is based on our products. Without that products, you don't have that cultural heritage; you don't have that local farmer that's connected to his culture that might have rituals or traditions of using that food. We have a standardization of food production that is based on a commodity. So this brought about producing the most to get an economic benefit, to be able to sell that product at a price. Makes it their stand that do not make food farmers into a situation where they lose – lose culture, lose tradition food and the food that they eat.

So what Slow Food does for the Ark of Taste is normally, could taste for us, but also to acknowledge the farmers and the culture that exists with those products. So it's about a

product but also about a people and a place, and telling the stories of those people that grow that product in the culture connection that there is with that product.

From that, we can move into the action from. The food products are identified, they within look at different ways. We have different product projects where people can be involved to support those farmers and these architects for that. Okay, we have chef alliance, where chef can actually support the farmers and those products in their menus. We have a presidio of project which is where we work with the farmers specifically to provide guidelines and protocols to sustain the quality of those products to be able to have a consistent market because that's what the market is looking for.

It also means that as a culture and as a people, we also have the ability to identify food regions. For example, the food regions are, and I will give you an example - for instance Italy, but it applies also to the Philippines. If we have a food region, for example, Liguria is famous for its Basil. Okay, it's not a Basil that has the same flavor that can be grown in my backyard and in another region; it has a specific flavor because it's grown in the area near the sea, okay, which makes a pesto. A Pesto is famous in Liguria. It's not the same flavor that you will actually find in different regions.

It's the same as a wine. For example, if you have a wine that's grown in one area, it won't be the same wine that's grown in another area. A wine or plant specific to the terrain or to the land from where it's grown. And the culture actually takes that and there's goal to have a time of how to use and how to grow.

So with the Ark of Taste, we look at rediscovering products, bringing that into a coupled true contexts to safeguard farmers and biodiversity which also supports the stories and raises the voices of their stories to allow the farmers to continue what they are doing or to bring back some of those stories.

The other side is we also have, for example, Slow Fish where the Ark of Taste may not be you eat to save, it maybe you eat less to save. So depending on the areas of what we're talking about and then safeguarding a biodiversity through the Ark of Taste, we'll determine off, the approach whether we eat to save or we eat less.

SEC. ANDANAR: Ark of Taste is very much about the local, the past and the future, the future of the young. What is Slow Food afraid the young of today and tomorrow may be missing?

DIRECTOR ELENA ANIERE: Now, what I see is happening from an observation perspective, is that there is an easy convenient where they eat. Okay, we eat for energy; we eat because we know we need to eat. And we eat for convenience which is very much, you know, might be about too many noodles. It might be about fast food going to, in Philippines for example, going to Jollibee. The active eating is about, 'Let's do this as quickly as possible because we don't have time.'

And personally, I think that's a huge loss not only for the youth, especially for the youth because that's what they've known, that's what they've been brought, that's what they've been shown that exist, that life is about technology. But there is no joy about eating and there's no using the senses about eating and the standardization of eating because it's about doing it quickly. So, the conversation at the table don't take place, the conviviality of food as the basis don't take place. That these products, the Ark of Taste for example, no longer exist; that we are brought up that the rice comes from Vietnam, but there's no historical heritage of rice that existed in the Philippines, for example.

That in Australia, there's no culture context of an Australian cuisine that was indigenous to Australia before colonization. That the young don't have the opportunity to be able to have joy in their tastebuds to be able to have a story to tell about their culture because we've taken it to a world of standardization. I suppose my theory is more straight – that they don't have what we've been so lucky to have!

SEC. ANDANAR: What is Slow Food's vision for Ark of Taste?

DIRECTOR ELENA ANIERE: For not to exist [laughs]. The need for to exist, that standardization isn't the standard; that diversity, the food biodiversity is the standard. That food cultures around the world don't have to raise their hands to state that they are actually losing products and food traditions. That the world actually takes this on and that supports small-scale farmers and cultures to ensure that the future has food biodiversity and culture biodiversity heritage in the future so we're not all eating McDonald's.

SEC. ANDANAR: Sa pagbalik po natin, alamin natin ang mga Philippine entry sa Ark of Taste list. Dito lang kayo sa Cabinet Report.

[COMMERCIAL BREAK]

SEC. ANDANAR: Kausap po natin ngayon si Chef Jam Melchor ng Slow Food Youth Network dito sa Pilipinas. Chef Jam, mahaba-haba iyong listahan ng Ark of Taste entries na mula sa Pilipinas. Bilang chef, alin po dito ang paborito ninyo at bakit?

CHEF JAM MELCHOR: As country head of Slow Food Youth Network Philippines, siyempre ako, personally, paborito ko talaga lahat ng nakalista doon. There are around 74 items that are currently listed under Ark of Taste pero may mga ni-nominate pa kami recently in this past two few years na kailangan pa nang mas in-depth research kaya hindi pa sila nakakapasok.

But definitely, talagang favorite ko iyong mga, halimbawa, katulad ng mga personal na na-nominate ko tulad ng 'Duman' which is the most expensive rice in the Philippines. It's found in Pampanga. It can be harvested once a year and it costs at around 400 pesos per kilo. Sobrang tedious ng process ng pagtatanim niya and usually hina-harvest ito sa December, in time for Christmas, for the kakanin in a small town called Sta. Rita in Pampanga.

Pagpatak ng December, bago pa iyon, naka-reserve na itong mga aanihin ng mga farmers. Actually, not your typical rice eh. It's very aromatic tapos iyong color niya it's, parang leaning towards gold. Tapos iyong narrative kasi, iyong pagpuproseso nito from planting to harvesting, may mga rituals na ginagawa iyong mga locals doon na parte na ng culture nila. At kasama iyong pagpasa ng pagtatanim na iyon from one generation to another, hanggang ngayon ay ginagawa pa rin. So that's actually part of our culture, food is part of our culture, hindi mawawala. So, iyon iyong story noong duman na hindi rin mapapantayan. Maliban doon sa quality noong grain na iyon.

SEC. ANDANAR: Chef Jam, mas mahirap na bang hanapan ng mga sangkap na nakalista sa Philippine Ark of Taste?

CHEF JAM MELCHOR: Definitely! Kasi the reason why they are listed in the Ark of Taste, para silang endangered species. So para sa amin, kapag hindi na pinag-uusapan, kapag hindi na ito na-document, wala ng market na maki-create. That is why we created this Ark of Taste listing. Same thing with other countries, we have about 190 countries na involved sa Slow Food na may sarili nilang listing. So, imagine, tayo 64 pa lang, but there are so many different produce sa buong country natin and if we only help—actually, kahit sino puwede naman mag-nominate eh. It's just iyong nomination process, because of course iyong Slow Food International needs to verify iyong details kung totoo iyong study behind it, before they publish it.

SEC. ANDANAR: Chef, ano iyong mga paborito ninyong traditional o heirloom recipes ang umaasa sa mga sangkap na nasa Ark of Taste?

CHEF JAM MELCHOR: In the recent years, we have been promoting heavily iyong Adlai and then iyong Cordillera rice. Of course mayroon ding batuan, tabon-tabon, there is this tawilis from the Taal Lake. So, mayroon ding mga dishes, like for example ako, I have tried to nominate sisig, ganiyan. So, kasi, it's not only the actual produce itself, but the actual output pati iyong dish puwede siyang ipasok.

Okay, for example, the tabon-tabon. Iyong tabon-tabon kasi it's actually used in kinilaw in some parts of the country. And this tabon-tabon is hard to find nowadays. Actually iyong kinilaw is considered a pre-historic dish. I think in one archeological site in Mindanao, nakita nila may tabon-tabon shells along with this mga skeletons. So, talagang hindi makukumpleto ang kinilaw kung walang tabon-tabon.

SEC. ANDANAR: Bilang manluluto, papaano ninyo matulungan mapanatili ang pagtatanim, pagpapalago at patuloy na paggamit nitong mga sangkap na nasa Ark of Taste list?

CHEF JAM MELCHOR: I'm wearing two different hats. So I am the leader of Slow Food Youth and I am also the founder of the Philippine Culinary Heritage Movement.

So, for the Filipino Food Movement, I have pushed for the government to recognize Philippine Cuisine and Gastronomy as a form of art and thankfully in 2018 President Duterte signed Proclamation 469 which is the Filipino Food Month. So, every April, we are celebrating Filipino Food Month, so that we can celebrate our food, our heirloom recipes, traditions, ingredients along with the culinary traditions na talagang dapat ipasa sa mga bawat generation na sumusunod. So, importante na just like other forms of art, music, dance, theater, visual arts, ang culinary arts ng Philippines ma-recognize and then everything will follow.

Most importantly, we have to love local and use local. Kasi it will definitely create more demand, lalo na sa mga Chefs. Of course mayroon tayong parang love for foreign ingredients but, we have really very reliable and nice ingredients all over the country, like you can get sundried tomatoes from Nueva Ecija, cashews from Palawan. You can get even pili from Bicol. Talagang dito lang iyong mga produce na iyan matatagpuan.

If only we do our part, mag-research tayo, tayong mga chefs and of course iyong mga information ngayon, it's actually easier, dahil isang Google lang, ita-type mo lang makikita mo na online. But again, iyon nga ang gusto ko na i-emphasize, important is to use local ingredients.

SEC. ANDANAR: Sa ating pagbabalik, pakinggan natin ang ginawa ng gobyerno upang hindi mawala ang mga sangkap na bahagi ng kulturang Pilipino.

Welcome back to the program, Pilipinas nandito pa rin po kayo sa Cabinet Report; at ngayon naman kasama natin si Assistant Secretary Kristine Evangelista ng Department of Agriculture.

Asec., thank you for sharing the Ark of Taste list with us. In this which of these Philippine produce is DA currently working on to save and promote?

DA ASEC. EVANGELISTA: To begin with, there are around I think 62 produce in the list in the Ark of Taste. And as you mentioned Adlai is one of them but also part of that list are coffee and cacao which are things that we are producing. As a matter of fact, they are called DA priority commodities.

But if we go to Adlai, first because that is of interest to a lot of people now because of the health benefits, as far as DA is concerned we are heavy on research and development at this point. Why? Because we want to see if we can improve the yield, because part of the marketing strategy will depend mostly on how much we can produce, then we can position the product.

So at this point, if we talk about Adlai, it's really more on the research side, which is being done by BAR and there is also collaborations with PhilRice and I think even IRRI is part of it, because it can become a rice substitute as well.

Now aside from that, I mentioned cacao and coffee which is part of the Ark of Taste list. Cacao is something that we have been noticed recently because we won a lot of awards in different areas that is why we are pushing it and we believe that it can be used as intercropping, which is more of an agricultural stuff. Why? Because it takes a while for it to grow, so intercropping so that it becomes an alternative also for our farmers so they have different kinds of commodities.

But if we look at it, I have a list of the things that we have been pushing because we have identified the market internationally and there are still great demands for cacao, even for coffee. But the thing is, the challenge is we have to come up with the quality of both the cacao beans and the coffee of which the market wants. Why? Because we are also competing with other countries, our neighbors here in the ASEAN who produce similar commodities, like there are other countries also who are heavy on coffee.

So, right now, as far as DA and marketing is concerned, what we are doing is we are trying to prioritize what can we really produce the most, so that we can create a dent in the world market and then that is something that we are going to be pushing. We also have to check if several regions have a capability to produce the product, because of the soil.

Like for example, another part of the list is pili. There is a great demand for pili. But it is mostly being produced in Region V. There is a science to it why it is growing there more than in other places. So, I am lucky that I am amidst agriculturist and scientist so with that we are taking the lead and marketing siyempre, we identify what the market needs internationally and locally and then we try to work with both operations and the research group so we can produce what the market needs.

So, again, if we look at it, Adlai is more in the local level pa lang; but cacao and coffee those are already something that we are already exporting and we can strengthen that and they are part of Ark of Taste.

SEC. ANDANAR: What are the particular challenges for saving these Philippine produce?

DA ASEC. EVANGELISTA: Because as I mentioned the research teams said that it only... I think it's only two cropping season if I am not mistaken. It's not like rice, the harvest is faster; adlai it takes a little longer. So, with that research has to come in to see if we can improve the yield. Because if we can have a good supply of adlai all year round, that is a good market opportunity as well.

And every time we guide people to get into agriculture as a business we also tell them how often, because the ROI is important di ba. Now for coffee and cacao, well one is our neighboring countries are producing similar commodity, so that in itself is a competition.

Second is we have to make sure that our cacao producers, even our coffee producers adhere to the quality that is being asked for by the market. Because there are some instances where

the buyer would say that if the size is not right, the moisture and all those things ‘no. So we have to guide the producers properly to make sure that their market will consistently buy from them.

Now if that is achieved, then we can get more people to buy because the other thing with marketing is since these are agri-commodities, meaning if it rains may problema ka na ‘di ba? If there’s drought, may problema ka rin! So there’s a challenge to make production consistent and especially when you’re talking to a buyer, you cannot tell them na, “I’m sorry, I can only give you two tons. I promised you 12 tons eh, inulan kasi kami eh.” ‘Di ba, it cannot be that way. So again, that’s where science will come in. So we should find a way to make sure consistent ang production based on what market demands.

SEC. ANDANAR: Asec., what can our different stakeholders do to help?

DA ASEC. EVANGELISTA: The stakeholders, they can come in different ways: One is we are also collaborating with other agencies as far as research is concerned. Because if we hasten research and we can also improve the yield and the production, so that’s one stakeholder. The next stakeholder of course is the buyer ‘no, but with that also, we’ve collaborated with the likes of Chef Jam who’s a very young chef. Why? Because he discovered that we have ingredients that tastes similar to what they have in other countries like, if I’m not mistaken, we have a kind of meat na para siyang Persico in a sense, so mayroon pong ganiyan.

And then we have Danggit, we have Tawilis you know and if you look at it we have anchovies in other countries because of the saltiness. So Chef Jam with his breed of a new culinary experts, they’re more into trying to experiment and how to use indigenous products. So maybe that is also a new stakeholder that we’re trying to engage. Maybe if restaurants will always serve barako coffee ‘di ba, if we can have our own coffee shop that would really, really carry the brand of Benguet Coffee, that would be a great push for the producers also.

We have products that already reached the international market as a matter of fact. But again, the consistency is something that we have to work on and also the branding because once it reaches international market or even here in the local scene ‘no, we’d always want to one day associate that this is Benguet Coffee ‘di ba? Kunyari Frappuccino Benguet Coffee, something like that para it’s associated, it goes back to the producers. There’s a certain ownership and we’re really pushing a product that our farmers will be proud of.

If you look at the list you have, even Siling Labuyo is part of that. Kadyos, kadyos if you’re from Visayas because I went to Iloilo and I love kadyos so that’s something, it can go mainstream. These can go mainstream provided our partners in the culinary world will also embrace our products also.

SEC. ANDANAR: Asec., napag-uusapan natin ang mga pagkain na sikat sa iba’t ibang lugar sa Pilipinas na nabibigyan ng kakaibang panlasa dahil na rin sa mga lokal na sangkap at lokal na

paraan ng pagluto. Ang Department of Agriculture ba ay may pakikipagtulungan sa Department of Tourism upang maisulong ang food o culinary tourism?

DA ASEC. EVANGELISTA: We are closely working with DOT and this is something that's exciting especially for me because we believe that, you know, when you push tourism – food tourism is something that is very appealing especially to Filipinos 'no. Like when we talk about food while having dinner. So people like to eat and I've also spoke with other people whose part of tourism and they said na there are things that people remember when they travel. Of course the scenery, the shopping - the food is one of them.

So since raw materials, ingredients come from DA, the collaboration with the Department of Tourism is very important. So they have this program, they call it 'Kain Na' and we are part of that. We are very much supportive, I don't mind being in the shadows because I think when tourism really takes off, it's a good thing for our farmers because that is another market for us.

SEC. ANDANAR: Nakakagutom po ang usapin, nakapagbabalik ng alaala galing sa kabataan natin sa probinsiya. Tunay nga na napakaraming lasa ang nasa paligid natin sa Pilipinas. Galing na rin sa mga sangkap na bunga ng lupa natin sa ating malawak na kapuluan. Pangalagaan po natin ang mga Filipino food and flavors po natin, lalo na iyong mga lokal dahil ang ilan dito ay unti-unti nang nalilimutan at unti-unti nang nawawala. Sayang naman.

Our local food and flavors help define who we are. They are part of what makes us truly Filipino. At dito nagtatapos ang isa na namang episode ng Cabinet Report. Pilipinas, magkita-kita po tayo ulit next Friday. Ito po si Communications Secretary Martin Andanar, kumain po tayo ng lutong Pinoy gawa sa sangkap na Pinoy this weekend. Masarap na, masustansiya pa at baka nga mas mura pa. Keep safe, mag-ingat po tayong lahat. Happy weekend.

###

--

News and Information Bureau-Data Processing Center