

By ALLEN ABASTILLAS

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources-9 continues its livelihood assistance to seaweed farmers in Zamboanga Peninsula.

BFAR-9 Director Ahadulla S. Sajili, Al-Haj disclosed on Friday that assistance to seaweed farmers is worth P12,000 for seedlings and other materials necessary for planting of seaweeds. The project livelihood assistance started 30 years ago nationwide.

Mars Usman, Regional Seaweeds Coordinator, said that Zamboanga Peninsula composed of Zamboanga City, Zamboanga Sibugay, Zamboanga del Sur and Zamboanga del Norte, is ranked No. 3 nationwide in the production of dried seaweed products. First is Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao and Second ranking is Region 4-B composed of Mindoro, Palawan, Region 6,7 and 8.

According to Usman, the total budget assistance to farmers was only P40 million nationwide but it was increased to P266 million during the time of Pres. Noynoy Aquino.

Usman said that the main problems and enemies of seaweed farmers are turtles and danggit fish (seaweeds are their favorite food) and the worst is storm as Philippines is a storm-front country.

Usman said that dried seaweed products are very important to human's daily food consumption. Its uses are for medicines, food binders, food additives, gelatin, for sardines and toothpaste. There is also an experiment that fibers from dried seaweed products are used for spacecraft body wall. It was discovered by a German scientist. — Allen Abastillas