

(Part III of "Reinventing the Overseas-Filipino Diet")

As in 2003 and in this series, many readers point to one common message: Do not just send money to the homeland to buy provisions for the hungry but use the funds to produce food. In other words, it might be better not just to provide the fish but to teach the people how to catch the fishes. It might be more advisable to use the money to help the recipients raise goats instead of sending canned milk to our folks back home.

There were good suggestions resulting from the publication in late 2003 of this series as a long article in the www.PinoyOnBoard.com of New York. Unfortunately, the article is no longer found in its archive.

In the early 1970s, Dr. Conrado R. Pascual, Sr., our Filipino hero cited in this series, and I discussed his idea on how our people might be able to raise vegetables in their respective homes. In fact, Dr. Pascual demonstrated his idea by turning into a "green house" his tool shed at his bungalow in the BF Homes in Paranaque City, Metro Manila. Dr. Pascual expanded and rebuilt his tool shed to raise mushrooms. And he was producing mushrooms that he gave to his kin and friends. He was also about to cultivate asparagus, using the principles of hydroponics. Unfortunately before Dr. Pascual was able to do the asparagus project, he suffered a stroke and went into a coma from which he was not able to recover.

Dr. Pascual had a very simple idea. He said that if a majority of Filipino homes raised mushrooms and asparagus, it was possible for the Philippines to become the number-one exporter of the said vegetables that were/are always in demand in many countries. He said that mushrooms and asparagus tips could be exported either fresh or canned.

It would not be difficult to convert parts of a Filipino home into "green houses" to produce the mushrooms, as Dr. Pascual demonstrated. He said that even in the provinces, the space between the nipa-home floor and the ground could be converted into "dark spaces" to grow mushrooms. And even apartments can house tanks that can grow asparagus hydroponically (sic). Dr. Pascual said that if millions of homes were able to grow mushrooms and asparagus, the next step would be to organize producers' cooperatives so as to pool their resources for canning or packaging, shipping and marketing. From a mere cottage industry, the efforts could be galvanized to enable the Philippines to become the world's capital for mushrooms and asparagus. Yes, two of the many vegetable varieties that could dramatically improve the health (both from the physical and financial aspects) of our people and improve their quality of life.

My friendship with Dr. Pascual (as I was his favorite mahjong partner) inspired me to think of food production as a topic of even some of my satirical articles.

If you have not yet read my piece on raising cattle in the homeland, please read my supposedly-very funny article on "Steakhood as an Alternative to the Statehood Movement." Please click on this link <http://www.mabuhayradio.com/content/view/36/51/>

To read Part II of the "Steakhood Movement," please go to <http://www.mabuhayradio.com/cont>

Turning the FOOD Into Food Production (Part 3) - MabuhayRadio

Written by Bobby Reyes

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I mentioned also goat raising (to produce milk, meat and leather) and planting of fruit trees in my essay at his link <http://www.mabuhayradio.com/content/view/134/90/>

Perhaps we can (and must) turn the FOOD Initiative to food production. As I wrote in my series of articles about "Reinventing the Philippines," it is high time to turn the "Balikbayan" boxes to "Back-to-the-Basics" activities like goat raising, cultivation of fruit trees, and as Dr. Pascual suggested, the growing of mushrooms, asparagus and other vegetables. To read more about this Back-to-the-Basics article, please go to <http://www.mabuhayradio.com/content/view/127/90/>

What say you, Overseas Filipinos? # # #

To read again the earlier two articles of this series, please go to:

[Reinventing the Overseas-Filipino Diet](#) [Inventing the "FOOD" for the World \(Part II\)](#)

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