

# the philippines

Rosalie Ellasus

San Jacinto, the Philippines



## Biotech corn ambassadress of Asia

From being a struggling widow in San Jacinto, the Philippines, Rosalie Ellasus now travels Asia and the world sharing her inspirational biotech farming experience with farmers, regulators, the media and even anti-biotech groups.

Rosalie's farming saga started in 1995 when her husband died, leaving her with three small children to raise and educate. This office worker took a gamble and bet all her savings on buying a 1.3 hectare rice and corn farm. With no previous farming experience – some challenging times followed. Rosalie and her neighbours faced repeated buyer rejections as their corn was affected by mites, disease and fungi producing toxins, resulting in poor quality products. Never giving up, she joined an Integrated Pest Management – Farmers School (IPM-FFS) in 2001. At graduation Rosalie was hooked on ag-science and best practices, but the real turning point came when she visited a Bt corn demonstration farm in Sta. Maria, Pangasinan, Philippines.

The corn was beautiful – and Rosalie was on an upward curve. In 2002 she held a Bt/non-Bt corn demo on her own farm, and it was the best attended in San Jacinto

– plus the good results were easy to see. Then Rosalie moved on to stacked trait, insecticide/herbicide resistant corn. From her first efforts in 2001 to 2008, yields rose from 3.5 to 7-9 tonnes per hectare. In 2006 she earned a 125 percent return from her 6 hectare, stacked trait corn farm. And, Rosalie's biotech success continued in 2009 when her, now, 10 hectares produced 8.9 tonnes per hectare.

In 2009, two of her sons earned a Software Engineering and B.S. Nursing graduate degree respectively, her youngest son sadly having died in a 2005 car accident. Rosalie actively shares benefits of her success through local and international agricultural organisations. In 2007 she won the globally recognised Dean Kleckner Trade & Technology Advancement Award, and still works hard as the Immediate Past President of the Philippines Maize Federation. Best of all, her golden hectares continue to reflect her very golden outlook.

