

STATUS REPORT 7 – AZAGRA FARM – FIRST COW + TANJAY INVASION

We had been eagerly anticipating the birth of our first cow from the stable of 7, four of whom are expectant, thanks to the guiding hand of William, the agri-vet consultant and his artificial-insemination paraphernalia. (No, I don't have any pictures yet of that procedure). When he isolated the cow in labor (see the left photo



showing it's old-looking hind quarters), we knew it could happen

“anytime”. Unfortunately, we went home for lunch and when we came back, it was all over. The calf was out, prancing around, and was a good-looking mestizo Brahman, whose height was unusually tall. That took some time for it learn how to



duck lower to get to the teats of it's mother. After half an hour of waiting for this to happen, I finally took the shot above right. That's a 2-1/2 hour old calf.

After last months' second goat birth, none of the remaining eight pregnant goats have given birth yet, and we kind of pitied the Anglo-Boer ram for not being able to do his thing, after all, we bought him for that purpose: to impregnate as many female goats as he can. William came Thursday late afternoon and told us of a good buy for a female goat in Bais, which was “in heat” and suggested we go there the next day to get it. We said we have to do it now because of the “Tanjay Invasion” tomorrow. More on that later.



Upper right picture shows the new goat we picked up that night. We placed her right beside “Emil” (our nickname for the ram, after the previous owner). Alas, we realized the next day that Emil was a wash-out. Wouldn't or couldn't do his thing. Farm boss Nitoy said Emil got sick during the rains and even after recovery, is now only good for pasture, unless of course either Viagra or Testosterone is effective. On right is a composite photo of Emil in earlier days. His large “gonads” are visible on the left photo.



The Tanjay Invasion is what a group of college friends billed their visit, after some fine-tuned coordination, with the Jun & Cynthia Calejesan and Lili Evangelista from the US, Bernie Muller from Switzerland, and Jimmy & Mercy Abad and Romy & Edna Manlapaz from Manila. We've often travelled with this group (plus a few others) over the years; to the US, Europe, and local trips like Batanes, Ilocos, etc. This was the second visit of the Abads to Tanjay. Photo on left shows part of the group at Dumaguete airport Friday.



Lili had just attended her Sta Theresa reunion and bussed in later that afternoon from Bacolod/Iloilo where she visited her kin; Bernie had attended a conference in Manila; and Jun & Cynthia were on their way to see their folks in Surigao. The others were Manila-based and they come and go like the four winds blow.

So the first order of the day was a late breakfast, followed by a sumptuous lunch, showing off as much of the fresh, native seafood that city slicker guests seldom have. Of course, Jimmy's carnivorous desires are legendary so we always had bacon and pork on the menu.

Barely visible in photo are large crabs, prawns, broiled fish, dried fish, squid, mussels, soup, red rice, and of course grilled pork chops.



After some rest at the house (bottom left photo), next on the agenda was visit to the farm. It was a tight fit for



all nine of us in the van, but it was just a 10 minute ride. Above, Edna relaxes on the hammock in the chicken house. Note the chicken nearby and the nest on the left background. There were 2 brooding chickens. Photo on the left is the as-yet uncompleted rest house. Beyond are the vegetable plots that are still to be seeded with various plants.

Then it started raining. Fortunately, Nitoy already had all the young coconut fruit on hand (it would have been difficult to climb the trees in the rain), and we had our fill of “buko” and coconut juice. We managed to visit the goat house, but were unable to walk further to the edge of the property to pay homage to the supposedly haunted balete tree and the spirits or elementals who made it their abode.

When we got back at the house late afternoon, Lili had just arrived on the bus. It was too early yet for another sumptuous dinner and even more so for the Friday highlight of “dancing in the park”. We already had made arrangements for DI’s (dancing instructors) - to lead the ladies instead of us clod-footed husbands. However, Jimmy said he’d dance with Mercy, as he had done in their last visit.

Now it was “hilot” time. We have a masseuse who really is good, learned the trade from her ma, etc. She can discern those kinked sinews and loosen them by her expert touch. An hour’s worth is totally relaxing. She can only do two a day, and that afternoon, it was Bernie and Edna who got massaged.

After supper, we were all set to walk to the park two blocks away for the dancing, but it started showering, then it got stronger and stronger, and the downpour literally didn’t let up until 24 hours later.

Next day Saturday mid-morning, despite the rain, we took three trips in the van to the beach house 15 minutes away. The third trip was for all the food including lechon. We had intended to while away the day there until dinner. First 2 photos are all about food; with the latter set up by Jun with a show of hands.



Right photo was taken by Jun from under an umbrella. As can be noted, everything is wet, me included, and that’s because I had just gone for a few minutes wading in the sea; the tide was low and the rain cold. But I got into that wet predicament for a totally different reason: the beach house’ water system, my pride and joy, a Rube-Goldberg concoction of cistern, pumps, garden hose pipes, float switches, was not working. The hose connected to the pump in the cistern had come loose. I changed to my trunks and jumped in. Fortunately, the cistern was half full and the water came up only to my thighs. When I finally had water flowing from the faucets and showers, I had to announce that part of it is my “essence”.

Nobody else braved the rain or the sea to get wet, save for Lili who did her walking exercise. Most of us lazed around, gossiped, read, and listened to the great music from the stereo. Then the power went off. When we found that Tanjay still had power, we decided to go back and have dinner in the house, but not after two more of the girls had their “hilot”. By 5 pm, after three trips, we all were back in the house. It still was raining. The news started getting grim. Many sections of the road to Dumaguete were impassable. The lower lying sections of Tanjay were flooded, and evacuees were being herded by the City authorities to the Sports complex nearby. Photo shows me wading in the backyard. First time this ever happened. Eight inches more and the water would have gone into the house.



Then the power went off. By default, it became more romantic: dinner by candlelight. Trouble is, it just wasn't power that went off. Municipal water is sourced from the headwaters of the river and although it is chlorinated, there are no settling tanks, so when it rains really hard and long, the water becomes turbid, and the water authorities shut off the mains. We have a SS reservoir overhead tank but it soon runs out.

Fortunately, the rain stopped at about 6:00 pm and power came back at about 10:00 pm. But water, the most important, didn't come back until afternoon the next day Sunday, long after most of the guests had gone. This prompted us to recall our college days when we'd all go to Baguio for summer conferences at the Patria - notorious for inadequate water - what we'd call “bathless Patria”.

Sunday morning was bright and warm; some went to mass and followed my admonition of staying at the back end where there still are two pillars left from the ten that the unpopular priest inexplicably removed.

We had rented a van to transport all ten of us for sightseeing in Dumaguete prior to boarding the plane at 4:00 pm. On the agenda was a visit by Jimmy and Edna to their old friend Edith Tiempo, national artist, and founder with her husband of the famous Silliman Writer's workshop.

The road to Dumaguete was full of devastation; many low lying sections had flash floods which carried away houses, trees, and roadbed. But Ms Tiempo's house on the hill, commanding a great view, was fantastic. That's she in the center on right photo. Jimmy treated all of us to lunch at the resort nearby.



Finally, after a drive around Dumaguete, and coffee at South Sea hotel, it was time to go to the airport. On right is the group photo. Jun and Cynthia stayed another day and took the ferry/bus to Cebu. The Tanjay Invasion was over, but will be repeated summer by another batch.



Some people lost their lives in the floods, but more interesting was the rumor that last week, a mermaid was caught in a fish trap, and sold to a Japanese tourist. The next day, the mother of this mermaid was also caught but returned to sea because she was ugly. All these floods were a punishment.