Welding is an important task in agriculture all year round in the Philippines. There are around 2.4 million farmers nationwide who incurred huge losses from their main occupation due to adverse effect of RA 11203, otherwise known as Rice Liberalization and Tarrification Law (RLTL) that plunged the farm gate price of palay into it’s lowest level. Sadly, the bigger the agricultural lands the farmer are tending, the huge losses were incurred by then. Estimatedly, Filipino farmers in the country have lost P30,000 per hectare from their rice farms last 2019 wet season.

Filipino farmers must be innovative, they must attend seminars and trainings and must learn new skills. Since machineries and rice farming equipments are made of steel and cast irons, a skill of a farmer in welding are very useful so that the cost of maintenance and repairs can be reduce in farming inputs.

Shielded Metal Arc Welding (SMAW) machine prices ranges from P3,500 to P10,000 each. These tools are very useful and valuable in agriculture farming. They are easy to carry and can be brought to the farm. This machine can be used in troubleshooting during the equipments breakdowns and repairs. Simple repair are very expensive if you don’t have smaw machine and skills to operate, and the hassle of bringing back and forth from farm to welding fabrication shop is very time consuming. Having skills in welding reduces the cash inputs, ease the farm machineries over all operation thus, the profits of the farmer becomes bigger.
Shielded Metal Arc Welding (SMAW)’s versatility, as it is readily applied to a variety of application and relatively simplicity and portability of the equipment makes it an advantage in rice farming. As Stated by David Wagman of American Welding Society, a working knowledge of key welding processes is vital when equipments breakdown, especially in land preparation, planting, watering and harvesting times. Welding joins metal pieces together and weld itself becomes integral to its strength. A related process known as hardfacing deposits mere resistant surfaces on existing metal components thus extending their service life. Hardfacing is commonly performed on metal edges that scrape or crush other tough materials such as plow blade cutting through the soil.

Farmers regularly need to repair and even modify or rectify their machineries and equipments. Repairing a broken plow or combine in the field by welding can literally save an entire crop during harvest time. Many items in agriculture benefits from hardfacing that effectively addresses three categories of wear. It is often found in relation is so called earth-engaging tools such as tractor buckets, blades, teeth and grain handling products. The impact wear group includes equipment used to pound and smash, such as crush hammers. And metal to metal wears includes steel parts, that roll or slide against each other and includes crane wheels, pulleys, iddlers or track drivers, gear teeth and shaft.

Farmer James Facemire of Edinburgh, Indiana James found that his welding skills go along way towards helping him control the ongoing cost of repairs. Timing is also important, farmers don’t have time to lose waiting for someone to fix machinery when they’re in the middle of planting or harvesting season. He said “THERE IS ALWAYS BREAKING WITH THE FARM EQUIPMENT, AND YOU CAN EITHER WAIT ON SOMEONE TO COME FIX IT OR I CAN FIX IT MYSELF.”
With the current implementation of Rice Tarrification Law, every farmer should open their mind to new ideas, farm innovation and technologies in order to surpass all challenges that in the end, “FILIPINO FARMERS WILL BE THE TRUE WINNERS.”

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