

## STATUS REPORT 9 – AZAGRA FARM - MOSTLY NEWER THINGS

Here's a quick run down, mainly pictorially, since the last report.



Back view of the rest house with new windows. Front part with patio still on-going, plus bathroom, kitchen, and other spaces.



We planted too much “pechay”. The 3 plots on left are partially harvested. After home consumption and giving away plenty, we sold the balance and it yielded a princely sum of 600 pesos, perhaps a quarter of the expenses. The pechay at the remaining 3 plots spoiled and we used them as pig feed.



The first squash, still quite a while before harvest.



The first eggplants.



A one week old kid.



A one day old kid.



The first pig litters. These two mother pigs were not supposed to be. The first one, on the left, was purchased for lechon (for the final wake dinner) by our cousin when we were in the US. But it was too big, so we had her buy one from the regular lechonero. Well, this saved pig it turned out to be pregnant and gave birth last week to a litter of 5. The pig on the right was purchased last year for lechon, but when we unexpectedly got a virile male pig as part of a goat purchase deal, we decided to let the two pigs get together, and this pig gave birth two days ago to a litter of 6. Unlike cows, goats, and to a certain extent chickens, who all live off the land, pigs have a much higher cost input in feeds. We don't intend to keep all the piglets, especially when the second set grows up and should not be mated to the male boar father. As soon as they are weaned, we will give away some.

Interestingly, the pig with a litter of 5 doesn't have too much milk, so we put them together with the other set and its mother. Now all the 11 piglets suckle from one pig who apparently doesn't mind it. After all, she has 14 teats. See left picture below. It rained earlier today, and despite the roof protection, and I was amazed to see the 11 piglets all huddled neatly together for warmth, as shown on the right picture. See, animals aren't dumb.



I don't think pigs need salt as part of their diet. The cows and goats do. As a matter of fact, there is such a thing called a "licking block", made of salt and other special ingredients that reportedly last a number of months, which our agri-vet consultant says is too fancy - doling out salt to the critters is more effective. I have heard stories on how an owner will shout out "aaasssiinnn" and all the cows start a near stampede to get their share. This, I still have to see. And if so, then I will say again, animals aren't dumb.

In the meantime, the pigs are kept under the jackfruit tree because superstition has it that the jack fruit is sweet, large and prolific, hence the succeeding litters should remain so.