A local producer of dairy products and livestock is pushing for “agriculture tourism,” saying that the region has many agricultural potentials waiting to be tapped.

Agri-entrepreneur and veterinarian Roberto “Dr. Bo” Puentespina told the BusinessMirror that he and the family-owned Malagos Garden Resort is now pushing for “agriculture tourism” not just as a source of income, but as a weekend lifestyle.

Puentespina said the livestock industry of local farmers in Calinan district in this city can be an attraction for other farmers coming from the nearby provinces of Bukidnon, Davao del Norte, North Cotabato and other provinces since agriculture is the backbone of their local economy.

Aside from having an economic opportunity, the farmers could also share the values of having a farm in the rural areas for those working in the offices on weekdays.

“As a farmer, we would like to share to other people the benefits of having even a small farm as a lifestyle weekend activity. After a stressful week day, they should come to their farm on weekends to relax and at the same time enjoy the benefits of having a few farm animals,” he said in an interview.

But Puentespina acknowledged that many of those who are in white-collar jobs lack the basics of starting up a small farm or even raising goats and chicken in their own backyards.

Thus, on August 7 to 8, it’s an “open house” in Malagos Garden Resort where visitors on the first day of the event can attend seminars on the Philippine cheese industry, renewable energy application in the farm, creating micro habitats and food tasting.

On the second day, there will be seminars on raising organic chickens and pigs, freshwater fish farming, cacao farming and craft-making sessions.
Puentespina said they will make the seminar very affordable. The regular entrance fee is P125 per person.

“We have yet to determine the entrance fee for the two-day activity. I’m thinking of maybe at least P250 a day. But they can contact us later for inquiries,” he said.

Moreover, there will be a special activity that is rarely done in this city or in Mindanao.

“We will have wine and cheese appreciation. This is a separate ticket from the regular entrance; this would only cost about P800 to P1,000,” Puentespina said.

He said the Malagos Farmhouse Inc., a sister company of Malagos Garden Resort, will produce 11 different forms and textures of cheese, nine of which are original recipes. But the wine will depend on the supplier, which in turn will be also their partner for the activity.

Local livestock farmers in Malagos and other parts of Calinan will be invited to showcase their farm animals during the event, Puentespina said.

“I will go around and ask them whatever available livestock they have and sell them during the two-day event,” he said, adding Puentespina Farms will also sell different variety of livestock. “We will start from our neighborhoods first; then, we will invite other livestock farmers from Bukidnon, the Davao provinces, North Cotabato and those from Luzon and the Visayas.”

Among the livestock that will be sold are Anglo Nobian goats and Holstein-Sahiwal cows, both common as of dairy milk. They will be also selling peacocks, ornamental chickens and ostriches.

He added that the participants of the two-day event will also have the opportunity to observe the milking process of goats.

“This is our way of sharing our knowledge to the people, to show them how the milking process is done. But our main point here is to encourage the people to raise even a pair of these milking goats even for their own consumption at home,” said Puentespina.

He added that a dairy goat needs five kilos of fresh grass a day to produce a liter of milk.

Aside from the seminars, other guests may also join farm games such as pig catching, fish catching, palo sebo and “dunk me.”

By Business Mirror