

Syngenta Foundation: improving productivity and links to markets

– here’s what an Indonesian newspaper* wrote in late 2012 (*Translation & comments SFSA*)

“Growing vegetables just with drops of water”

Water is no longer a problem for maize and vegetable farmers in Oelatimo, Kupang. “Supplying water through a drip irrigation system can save up to 73% of the water. With this system we do not need lots of water to make fallow land productive”, says Zet Malelak, chairman of (*SFSA partner*) P4S MARDIKA.

Zet explains this at a farmers’ field day on “Water Efficiency for Maize and Vegetable Cultivation”, in Oelatimo. Among the audience are Head of Kupang District, Ayub Titu Eki, staff from the Provincial Dept. of Agriculture, the owner of (*a nearby*) restaurant and hundreds of farmers.

Even in a dry season, says Zet, maize and vegetables can grow well with drip irrigation, both in terms of quality and quantity. Alongside the maize on the 3 ha demo farm are chilis, tomato, aubergine (egg plant) and water melon. Cultivation is done by the Efata Farmer Group with guidance from P4S MARDIKA (P4SM)and the Syngenta Foundation (SFSA). Zet and SFSA Project Manager Panut Djojsumarto hope that this demo will motivate more farmers to cultivate more fallow land, including in the dry season, and to develop their economic activities.

As Regional Project Manager for Asia, Clive Murray, explains, SFSA works with poor farmers to improve their livelihoods through sustainable agriculture. Other stakeholders and potential investors will also be invited to the pilot farm, and encouraged to work together to improve farmers’ welfare. Clive adds that SFSA is not a donor institution that just gives money. “We focus more on delivering technology and other support to evolve traditional methods into modern farming, and to increase productivity.” SFSA aims to expand this project to other regions, he adds.

“I am ready to buy”

“I’m ready to buy vegetables produced by Oelatimo farmers”, says Nelayan Restaurant owner Serly Mu, “because the quality is good”. At the field day she bought 200 kg of tomatoes. District Head Ayub Titu Eki adds that if every village had a pilot farm like this, nobody in the area would go hungry. Eki thanked (*everybody involved*).

Clive Murray (*adds*) that his dream is that in five years’ time, the farmers will say they no longer need him. That would mean that they have already gained the necessary expertise to turn dry land into more productive land and earn enough money.

*Here is the original article:



Pos Kupang.pdf