

Completing Doctorate for Studying Palm Sugar Production

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Becoming palm sugar makers may bring additional income to farmers from Wolo sub-district in Kolaka regency, South East Sulawesi, as this business has the potential to make them prosper. This is a research outcome done by a doctoral student of Universitas Gadjah Mada on 72 palm sugar makers who averagely generated Rp39.6 millions a year from this business. "As many as 50 people or 69.44 percent have income less than Rp50.4 millions per year," said Ilma Sarimustaqiyma Rianse, SP., .Sc., in her open doctoral promotion at Faculty of Agriculture UGM on Tuesday (21/6).

The Agriculture lecturer from Universitas Halu Oleo in Southeast Sulawesi said the highest annual earnings from sugar making was Rp136 million, the lowest Rp7.3 millions whilst average earnings Rp39.6 millions. They are also considered more prosperous as the money they earn is spent not only for basic needs, such as food and clothing, but also secondary needs including child's education, health, services, recreation, etc.

Ilma said that the income of palm sugar home industry in Kolaka was more equally distributed. This industry even meets sustainability as there is production factor availability, economically, financially, and environmentally feasible, and efficient production that gives added value. "The contribution from the income of palm sugar makers is as high as 78.13 percent," she said.



In spite of this background, the palm sugar makers need to cultivate the palm trees more to ensure palm juice supplies for raw materials. They also need to do agroforestry to support wood supplies for fueling. “These will add to the environment benefits of palm sugar industry,” she added. In addition, the people need to think of alternative fuels so as not to be dependent on forest timber, for example by using coconut fibres or husks. She urged the local government to prioritise palm sugar production development, for example by giving product diversification training.

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