

## UGM Collects 1,111 Indonesian Vegetable Varieties

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Centre for Agrotechnology Innovation (PIAT) of Universitas Gadjah Mada has collected as many as 1,111 varieties of vegetables from various regions in Indonesia. The collections are stored in the Vegetable Genetics Bank as a form of repository of vegetable germ plasms, the first in Indonesia.

PIAT researcher, Dr. Siwi Indarti, said most of the collections were long beans, chilli, cucumber, even the critically endangered winged beans and cosmos. "We wish to collect typical tropical vegetables and develop them for cross-breeding," said Siwi to reporters after opening the UGM Vegetable Expo running in PIAT compound in Kalitirto area, Sleman regency on Friday (24/8)

According to Siwi, the project would continue by involving students doing Student Community Service programme across Indonesia. Normally, the students would collect vegetable seeds from the programme areas. "Then we sort the seeds, breed and characterise them to know their specific excellent traits," she said.

For example, chili peppers have their own characters based on regions in terms of disease and pest resilience and productivity. "We will cross-breed the plant with similar vegetables from other regions to get new varieties," she added.



Furthermore Siwi explained the Centre had started the project since last year. Although new, the Centre plans to launch new varieties in 2022 resulted from the cross-breeding. “We plan to launch new varieties in year 2022,” she said.

The UGM Vegetable Expo lasted from 23-24 August as an effort to promote vegetable consumption from high quality vegetables. “We want to educate the people on the importance of vegetable consumption,” she added.

Asti Irwandiyah, farmer in Yogyakarta, said she teamed up with around 300 farmers to produce high quality vegetables through sustainable agriculture projects. The harvest will be purchased and marketed by the farmer group at a high price. “We want to break the distribution link of the produce, later we market it online and offline through communities,” she said.

Despite the new project, said Asti, the revenue of the produce ranged between Rp1-2 million per day. Previously, the farmers were involved in farmer schools in order that they could give an additional value to the vegetable and fruit they produced. “We train them on managing post-harvest projects and grow rare plants, such as making juice of leaves of drumstick tree, centella leaves, beet, also ginger crystallised fruit as well as varieties of salads,” she added. They made sure that the farmers refrain from using preservatives, colouring, thickener and whitener, she explained.

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