

Namibia Interested in Developing SRI Rice

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Kulonprogo - Namibia is interested in implementing System of Rice Intensification (SRI) that has been developed by UGM since 2003 in Sleman and Kulonprogo. SRI is proved to be able to increase agricultural production. Compared with conventional systems, the SRI concept rice uses less water, wider spacing, and only uses one seed for one hole. "In average, the production is 10 tons per hectare, once it had reached 13 tons per hectare. Meanwhile, the conventional system can produce only 5-6 tons per hectare," said Nuryanto (53), a farmer from Ngestiharjo village in Kulonprogo while receiving the Namibia delegation at the rice field, guided by Agricultural Faculty of UGM on Tuesday (19/6).

Nuryanto said that the use of seeds for SRI rice is less as compared to conventional systems. "Generally, 5 kg of seeds is used for 100 m². Meanwhile, SRI only takes less than 1 kg," he added.

Lecturer of Agricultural Faculty as well as researcher of SRI rice cultivation, Dr. Ir. Benito Heru Purwanto, said the development of SRI rice cultivation has been applied since 2003. Initially, introducing SRI rice cultivation system to farmers was not easy to do. Farmers were accustomed to conventional systems because it was easier to obtain fertilizer, seeds and planting system instantly. "Here, they have to use organic fertilizers and less seeds," he said.

However, along with production increase, the concept of SRI rice began to be accepted by the people. "Rice production increases up to 3-5 tons per hectare and saves more water. On average, they are able to harvest up to at least 9-12 tons per hectare," he said.

Osmud Wandemele, Vice Rector of Cooperation, University of Namibia, said the concept of SRI rice is potential to be applied in his country. Moreover, the University of Namibia has been working with



UGM since 2008 for rice development project in order to improve food security. In fact, he has several times brought experts from UGM to come to Namibia. "Namibia has about 2.1 million residents and more than half of them are farmers. We are proud and delighted that this cooperation has been going well," he said.

Before this cooperation, Osmud Wandemele said that rice was a very rare commodity in Namibia. In fact, to get rice, people should buy it from neighboring Angola. "I would not eat rice three times. Usually, rice is only served if there is family party," he said.

Dr. Ir. Taryono, M.Sc., one of UGM researchers who are invited to assist Namibian farmers, said that in addition to introduce the cultivation of rice, he provides technical guidance on agricultural workers. "In fact, we are also promoting the tractor made in Indonesia. There is now a regular order of tens to hundreds of tractors from there," he said.

The Namibia delegation accompanied by representatives of Namibia Embassy, Toary Worang, also visited some of the SRI demonstration plots of land in Jering hamlet, Sidorejo, Godean, Sleman, and Ngestiharjo Village in Wates, Kulonprogo regency.

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