

Gama Melon Suitable for Dry Land

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GUNUNGKIDUL - Faculty of Biology UGM has used dry areas along the coastlines of Gunungkidul by developing Gama Melon in the dry season; it is used to increase farmer's income. Until now, farmers make their earnings from cassava yields.

"This is part of the efforts to make use of the hundreds of hectares of dry land in Gunungkidul," said Dr Budi Setiadi Daryono, researcher of Gama Melon, during a harvesting event with farmers from Kemadang village in Tanjungsari, Gunungkidul regency, Monday (30/9).

Budi said up to this time, coastal areas have not been considered potential. Even in some places of Gunungkidul, the local people tend to sell sand and rocks to make ends meet.

"We hope that there is an increase of life quality at the end of the day," said the lecturer in

Biology.

So far, four varieties have been developed: melodi gama 1 cultivar, melodi gama 3 cultivar, gama melon basket and gama Tacapa. Seeds were distributed, producing 3 tonnes per 1000m². “The gama melon basket and melodi gama are suitable for the dry areas of Gunungkidul,” he said.

Gama melon is harvested faster between 56-60 days while other melons 65-70 days. Also, melodi gama 1 and melodi gama 3 as well as gama melon basket has more vitamin A and C content.

Suwarno, chairman of farmer’s group, said initially he grew 2,500 seeds that produced 1.5 - 2 kilo of melons per tree, totalling 3 tonnes that generated IDR15 millions with each melon sold at 5000 each. “After I made income, other farmers would like to try it, too,” he said.

Supriyadi, Head of Crop and Holticulture Agency of Gunungkidul, expressed appreciation of the cooperation. To support this, the local government has given agricultural equipment worth Rp40 millions.

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