

Healthy Food Products from a Healthy Farming System

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Editorial

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Consuming healthy food is important but often overlooked by some community groups, especially in developing countries. Healthy foods will be produced by a healthy farming system such as organic farming systems. The low purchasing power of people in developing countries for organic products is a major cause of the lack development of organic farming in the countries such as in Indonesia. Whereas, in developed countries, consumption of organic products has become an important concern because the benefits are not only for human health, but also to maintain the environment health of the soil, water and air through the application of a healthy farming system. Healthy farming system does not mean forbidding the use of chemical fertilizers. Healthy farming only limits the use of agrochemicals that can lead to environmental pollution due to overuse. Application of organic fertilizers provides better benefits to soil and plants. Soil and plant quality is better than using chemical fertilizers.

Healthy soil, water and air resources can increase the productivity of agricultural land. Unfortunately, healthy farmland is getting less and less due to conventional farming systems that apply high doses of agrochemicals such as chemical fertilizers and chemical pesticides. We can see this condition from the degradation of soil quality in agricultural land and the low nutrient content of agricultural products such as cereals and vegetables sold in traditional markets that are harvested from conventional farming systems.

The application of a healthy farming system as well as organic farming should be supported by the government, especially in the provision of organic fertilizer. Making

organic fertilizer requires special place, raw materials of organic waste and composting process equipment. Producing compost fertilizers from rural and municipal organic waste can help reduce the pile of waste in our environment that can pollute the environment. On the other hand, crop yields derived from organic farming systems have higher quality compared to crop yields from conventional farming in terms of shelf life, nutritional quality such as vitamin C content, antioxidant compounds, sugars, vitamin B etc. The results of our research on Vermicompost application on organic vegetable cultivation showed an increase in nutritional content of organic vegetables ranging from 20-30% measured from vitamin C content, sugar content, total dissolved solids, phenolic compounds, potassium and calcium content compared to vegetables resulting from conventional farming systems. This shows that organic farming systems provide healthy and nutritious food products that improve the quality of public health. Application of Vermicompost not only produces healthy and quality crops yield but also maintains the quality of the soil on the farmland. The agricultural land remains productive in the long term. Soil quality is determined by the physical, chemical and biological indicators of the soil. High quality soils will exhibit easily tilled, physically non-compact and are capable of providing water and air for plants. Chemically, high quality soil is able to supply sufficient nutrients for plants. Biologically, high quality soil will be able to function as a good soil microorganism habitat.

Implementation of organic farming system is not difficult; it only requires the willingness and awareness of farmers to apply it. Organic farming can maintain the quality of soil, water and air resources. Making organic

fertilizers can use crop residues and livestock manure that is available abundantly in rural areas. In urban areas, we can use household organic waste. The problems often appear in the application of organic farming systems is the availability of labor to collect, sort and process the organic waste. This problem can be solved by providing a harvesting residue shelter and organic waste and using mechanization equipments such as organic waste chopper and grinder to accelerate the process of making organic fertilizer. Counseling and training on making organic fertilizer to farmer can help accelerate the development of organic farming in the developing countries.

Another problem is the application of organic fertilizer gives a long effect on the plant. Developing country farmers prefer to use chemical fertilizers that have a rapid effect on crops and provide higher yields than organic fertilizers. The orientation of the developing country farmers is still aimed to obtain high yields compared to the quality of the crop yield. The farmers consider that the use of chemical fertilizers is the best soil management practice and more practical than having to make organic fertilizer. They always burn the harvest residue to speed up the next planting preparation. The crop cultivation system has been going on for decades and it is difficult to change it. To overcome this problem needs support from the government in the provision of mechanization equipments for making organic fertilizer, counseling to

the farmers community and provision of credit subsidies for the implementation of organic farming system as well as the guarantee of marketing of organic products. This solution will be more effective when followed by public awareness of healthy lifestyles and increased purchasing power of the people against healthy food products to prevent the increasing degenerative diseases in developing countries.

Healthy soil, water and air resources are one of the factors that support healthy and quality agricultural products. Consuming healthy food can support the quality of human life not only be more physically and psychologically healthy but also productive for work and creativity. A healthy and good body condition will support any activities toward success or achievements.

Healthy food products are produced from a healthy farming system. Healthy and quality agricultural products show good and healthy soil management. Consuming healthy food may become unfamiliar in a developing country such as Indonesia; but this does not mean it is impossible. If farmers and consumers are continuously educated on the theme of the importance of healthy agriculture and healthy food consumption, then healthy farming by maintaining healthy soil, water and air resources will become a new culture in developing countries.

