

'Pickling vegetables way forward for farmers'

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A senior UMS researcher suggested that vegetable farmers in Sabah should fully explore the local wisdom in pickling vegetable to overcome the problem of a glut of greens during the MCO period. – NSTP/File pic

KOTA KINABALU: A senior Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) researcher suggested that vegetable farmers in Sabah should fully explore the local wisdom in pickling vegetable to overcome the problem of a glut of greens during the period of Movement Control Order (MCO).

Dr Jurry Foo, from the UMS Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, said many vegetable farmers in Sabah, especially in Kundasang, Ranau, were facing problems in selling their products since MCO was implemented on March 18.

Kundasang's highland fresh vegetables are normally sold in and around Ranau district or become suppliers to wholesalers who come from other towns in the state, including Kota Kinabalu.

ADVERTISING

“I’m aware of the problems faced by the vegetable farmers, especially in Kundasang, and it is sad to know that their products have to end up as waste since they were unable to sell it outside the district.

“So, I am suggesting that instead of throwing away the unsold greens, they should optimise the local wisdom in pickling vegetable, so that they could still earn income and also able to sell their products in value-added condition even after the MCO,” she told Bernama here recently.

The senior UMS lecturer and researcher said mastering the local knowledge and tradition of pickling vegetable could help vegetable farmers enhance and diversify their sources of income and also have the convenience of working at home.

She said, based on her study, there are several locally produced pickled products using local wisdom which are already popular among the locals and has the potential for bigger markets.

These products include "bosou sayur", salted veggies, "sambal" and vegetable crackers.

“As a researcher, I thought I should also contribute ideas with the intention of helping the farming community, especially those affected by the MCO.

“So I wrote an article through one social media, in which I suggested that vegetable farming community should make the best out of the local wisdom in pickling vegetable to avoid their unsold greens ending up as waste.

“I even showcased, through online video, my own innovation on how to make 'serunding kobis' (cabbage floss). The viewers’ response was quite encouraging and some even asked for the techniques. I have so far conducted two on-line workshops on how to make salted vegetables and 'serunding kobis', as well as other types of veggies.

“Some were surprised to know that cabbage can be made into floss,” Jurry said, adding that she will continue her on-line workshop to enable more people, especially among the farming community, to benefit the knowledge.

Jurry said during her recent study she found out that vegetable farmers, especially in Ranau district, are quite resilient due to the fact that they actually have the expertise or local wisdom to process their resources but not on a big scale.

To a question, Jurry, who is also deputy director of the Centre for Co-curriculum and Students Development at UMS, said in order to value-add the pickling of vegetables, entrepreneurs need to be more creative in diversifying their products by using the local wisdom to the optimum.

“I am also trying to get a research fund to study and to help some local products to be patented, including pickling vegetable, as innovation through UMS and the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation,” she added. -- BERNAMA