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Vegetable production is an important source of income for small farmers in north-western Java, but little information is available on the contribution of vegetable production to farm income.

We monitored the financial performance of ten vegetable farmers in north-western Java between May 2013 and September 2016. Financial data was registered and analysed for all crops produced in that period and farm incomes calculated. Farm income was defined as the difference between crop income and input costs, including the cost of hired labour. The costs of land rent, which were excluded, typically range between 680,000 and 2,380,000 IDR/ha per year, or between IDR 1,900 and 6,500 per day, in north-western Java.

The major crops were shallot and sweetcorn, alternated with hot pepper, bitter gourd, yard-long bean and rice. The farms produced between six and nine crops in the monitoring period and realised an average income of 105,000 IDR/growing day, or 30,000 IDR/day per household member (see Table). The national poverty line in Indonesia is 11,000 IDR/day per person, which is lower than the poverty line of 26,500 IDR/day (1.90 USD/day) used by the World Bank. Six out of the ten farmers in our sample generated additional income through a small shop and this is not included in the farm income. Information from other farmers in the same area showed that about 10% of the household income was generated by off-farm income.

Six out of the ten farms had an income per person below

the poverty line set by the World Bank. One farm ended up with a financial loss after 2.5 years of producing vegetables. About 53% of the crops grown by the ten farmers resulted in a profit.

As the Figure shows, farms with less than about 0.5 ha generate incomes per household member that are well below the national and international poverty lines. The costs of land rent have not been accounted for and add to the bleak income picture for smaller farms. Vegetable production alone cannot lift these small farms out of poverty. Farm size expansion and other income-generating options need to be explored to alleviate poverty among the smallest and poorest vegetable farmers in the lowlands of Java.

Figure. Relationship between farm size and average income per household member.

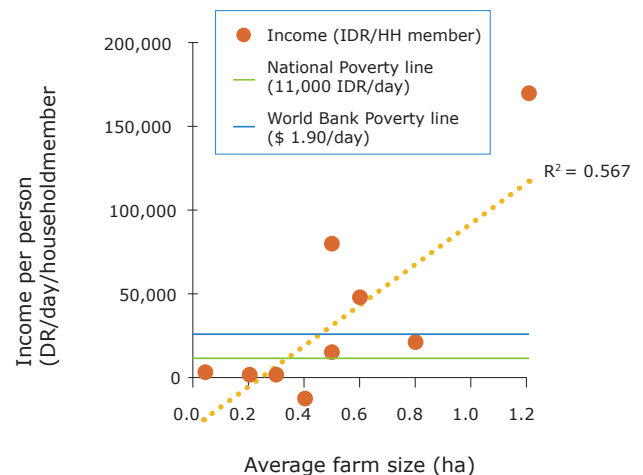


Table. Profit per crop, total farm income (IDR x 1,000,000) in 2.5 years and farm income (IDR) per growing day

Profit per crop, total farm income (IDR x 1,000,000) in 2.5 years and farm income per growing day (IDR).													
farm	Average farm size (ha)	Crop number ²⁾									Farm income	total growing period ¹⁾ (days)	farm income/day (IDR)
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9			
A	0.8	-29.5	121.6	-5.3	1.8	-6.4	27.1	-0.5			108.8	627	173,552
B	0.2	12.2	17.5	-12.6	-11.3	0.5	0.5	-4.5	0.1	-0.4	1.9	724	2,646
C	1.2	187.5	56.3	0	-34	95.1	-10.9	27.3	28.3		349.7	691	506,013
D	0.6	10.8	-9.3	0	15.8	5.4	7.1				29.9	616	48,553
E	0.4	17.4	-31.7	-10.4	10.3	3.8	-13.7				-24.3	645	-37,665
F	0.5	118	25.9	-9.5	-41	69.9	3.9	-1.4	-2.8		163	686	237,598
G	0.04	1	2.7	0.1	0.4						4.3	800	5,327
H	0.8	1.9	2.8	29.3	11.7	6.5	6.1				58.3	731	79,800
I	0.3	1.4	0.8	-0.6	-1.3	-1.5	-1.5	4.6			2	699	2,796
J	0.5	4.1	2.5	1.6	1.4	6.1	6.5				22.2	721	30,761
mean	0.5										71.6	694	104,938

1) The total growing period is the number of days that farmland was cultivated with a crop in the period May 2013-September 2016.
 2) Profits from shallot in red, sweetcorn in orange, rice in green and other vegetables in blue.

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