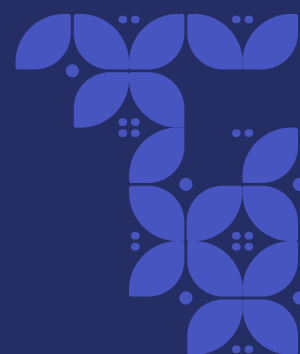




Planting ideas: Empowering women

Stories from PRISMA



Kementerian PPN/
Bappenas



Australian Government





Empowered women farmers have

1. Access to products and services that improve their productivity and incomes,
2. Increased their knowledge and skills
3. Financially are better off
4. Have more manageable workloads
5. More of a role in decision-making
6. Greater agency in leadership and social networks



From Bapak-Bapak to Ibu-Ibu (the men to the women)

Pak Joko, senior agronomist at high-yielding rice seed producer, Agrosid/Primasid and smallholder farmer Bu Narto in her field in Central Java.

In Central Java, PRISMA is partnering with high-yielding rice seed producer, PT Agrosid Manunggal Sentosa/ PT Primasid Andalan Utama (Agrosid/Primasid), to adapt its outreach and marketing to reach more women farmers. Agrosid/Primasid trained agronomists on how to engage more women and introduce all women farmers to women farmers meetings.

‘We are changing how we talk to farmers. It’s gone from ‘bapak-bapak to ibu-ibu’. We pay more attention to women participants in meetings and encourage their input,’ says Pak Joko, a senior agronomist

for the high-yielding rice seed producer, Agrosid/Primasid. Pak Joko oversees more than 20 agronomists in Central Java and supervises his own area. Earlier this year, he received training to better understand the barriers women face in accessing information on good agricultural practices and how to engage women in various forms of communication.

As a result, he has changed how farmers’ meeting are promoted, whom they are promoted to and how they are run. Pak Joko now regularly communicates on WhatsApp with women farmers like Ibu Narto, a rice farmer from Central Java.

“There is no feeling like participating in a (women farmer’s) event and seeing what you can do,” says Ibu Narto.

‘Getting direct information from Pak Joko has been incredibly helpful. When I attend farmer’s events where I meet other farmers, I feel a lot more confident in what I am doing. It’s important that we get this information directly – so I can understand it and implement it immediately without relying on second-hand news from my husband,’ explains Ibu Narto.

The Mapan rice seed variety uses less water and less fertiliser

than retained seeds and is less time-intensive for farmers.

‘Being a Mapan (high-yielding rice) farmer is a bit like being a lazy farmer. The stems are thicker, so the rats can’t chew them, and the leaves are higher, which protects the rice seeds from birds – this means less time is needed to tend the fields and shoo the birds away,’ she explains.

Pak Joko has observed a difference in household incomes in the area since the increased use of high-

yielding rice varieties. ‘Families that never had fans now have 2 of them or are able to buy a fridge.’



We are changing how we talk to farmers. It’s gone from ‘bapak-bapak to ibu-ibu’. We pay more attention to women participants in meetings and encourage their input.

Joko, Agrosid/Primasid senior agronomist, Central Java.

PRISMA is partnering with Agrosid/Primasid to support the wider adoption of high-yielding rice seeds to improve the productivity of women and men farmers and build resilience to climate change.

The partnership supports promotion, marketing, and outreach tailored to women farmers, who are reaping the benefits of high-yielding varieties and good agricultural practices.



Smallholder farmer Bu Narto in her field in Central Java



Capital for green growth

financing women's groups to invest in high-value organic agriculture

Ibu Lasmi, coordinator of the Mekar Abadi Women's Farmers Group (KWT), maintain vegetables in her garden.

PRISMA supported former partner, financial institution PT Permodalan Nasional Madani (PNM) to increase financing for smallholder farmers and medium and small enterprises (MSME) with a specific strategy for engaging women farmers. PNM developed a model that attaches training to loans for women farmer's groups to increase productivity, while for PNM, this helps with customer acquisition and retention.

'I like the togetherness of the group; we are a community. We don't only meet to talk about farming but other important issues we're all going through,' explains Ibu Lasmi. Ibu Lasmi is a

vegetable farmer in Kopeng, a village perched on a hillside in the foothills of Mt Merbabu. Mt Merbabu is not far from Mt Merapi and sits in the chain of volcanoes that cuts through Java. The soil is fertile, and Kopeng is not far from the capital of Central Java, Semarang and the connections to traders that a city presents.

Ibu Lasmi has been living in the area all her life. Her mother is 88 years old and continues to work as a farmer on her plot, as does her son. Her daughter is in Jakarta studying theology, when she finishes, she will return and work as a farmer. 'If you're not a farmer, you're a labourer building houses or maybe a driver,' says Ibu Lasmi.

Going up a level

Ibu Lasmi is one of the leaders of a women farmers group, Kelompok Wanita Tani, that uses a loan to grow organic vegetables in a greenhouse jointly owned by the group. Each woman has their own plot and takes turns tending to the communal plot.

As Ibu Lasmi describes the group, she repeats that the "spirit of togetherness and working together on a project" is what stands out. The group's progress is also perhaps a result of this camaraderie. To start the women's farmer's group organic farming project, the group received a loan from the



I like the togetherness of the group; we are a community. We don't only meet to talk about farming but other important issues we're all going through.

Ibu Lasmi, coordinator of the Mekar Abadi Women's Farmers Group, Kopeng, Central Java.

non-bank financial institution, PT Permodalan Nasional Madani (PNM).

'PNM supported us with the capital and the financing. We started with IDR2 million (AUD200)

and have increased to IDR7 million (AUD700). What I found helpful was the support from PNM to strengthen communication in the group and define the roles, our business knowledge and ways to improve our farming, like making our own organic fertiliser,' explains Ibu Lasmi.

As a result, the group has now broken even in organic farming. The group decided to go organic for their communal plot, as the produce has a higher selling price.

'We've improved our productivity. With the Mekaar loan (PNM product name) we could make weekly instalments for up to 50 weeks. Agriculture is seasonal and we needed a loan, which we can now get.'

A cluster approach

PNM was established in 1999 and has developed an extensive business across Indonesia lending money to ultra-micro and medium and small enterprises (MSMEs). In 2021, PRISMA approached PNM to strengthen its business model by engaging more smallholder farmers and MSMEs. The PRISMA team also encouraged PNM to consider how their businesses could benefit women farmers.



Ibu Lasmi stands in front of the organic vegetable garden managed by KWT Mekar Abadi.

For businesses, women farmers present a largely untapped opportunity for market growth – be it for high-yielding seeds, fertiliser products or, in this case, microfinance loans. To help PNM develop its offering to women farmers, PRISMA looked at how to support customer retention for PNM by engaging women farmers beyond loans.

PNM's Capacity Development Officer, Ibu Devi explains, 'We introduced a cluster approach to support our customer retention strategy – where we run a 6-month program with women farmers groups, training women in agriculture to improve productivity while also strengthening the group's way of working together with communication, organisational development, financial

management, and business skills training.'

At the end of the 6-month period, the aim is for women farmers' groups to conduct their own meetings, independently contact off-takers, and increase their investments. Through this process, women are building their agricultural knowledge and skills, using the experience of the communal plot on their own plots.

Business development

For PNM, the clusters have been a source of learning about what is possible in agriculture. 'We are actively looking for other potential agriculture areas to support and actors to collaborate with, such as input companies, off-takers or organisations engaged in agriculture.'

We will continue to support the women farmer groups for organic farming so that they can reach a wider market and better selling prices.' Ibu Lasmi explains what she has learnt. 'Before we just bought fertiliser and used it. Now we know the dosage and even make it ourselves from household waste and our animals.'

This is not only improving productivity but farmer incomes in the process. 'We can see that organic farming has a higher value and we aim for organic certification. It takes 2-3 years for the chemicals to work their way through the soil, but we'll get there.'



Women who are members of the Mekar Abadi Women's Farmers Group (KWT).



Being milked dry by foot-and-mouth disease

Concentrate feed helping the dairy sector recover

Ibu Surani, dairy cow women farmer, Sengon village, Klaten District, Central Java

PRISMA is partnering with animal feed company, Nufeed to expand the use of quality animal feed into new areas. As a result of the partnership, Nufeed has expanded from a pilot area of 4 districts in Central Java to 50 districts in Central, East, and West Java. Total sales for Nufeed almost doubled during the partnership period. Average milk production has increased from 9 to 13 litres per cow per day (a 30% increase) and the incremental income increase for farmers using Nufeed is from IDR 3.3m per month to IDR 5.7m.

Ibu Surani's life took a turn during infancy when her father passed away. The 75-year-old

grandmother of 7 recalls being in 2nd grade at primary school when she was sent to Salatiga to work as a housemaid for a merchant family.

Ibu Surani's only surviving sister went to Semarang to work as a restaurant hand. Her 4 other siblings died when they were young and before she was born.

Ibu Surani's mother was a farmer from Sengon village, where she raised dairy cows before her death last year. Ibu Surani married and had twin girls, but when her husband died early in their marriage, she returned to Sengon village to farm with her mother. Ibu Surani lives in a modest single-room house with a galley kitchen

and a cow stable connected to the back of the house. Ibu Surani apologises for her simple surroundings but is proud of the house her childhood employer built for her and her mother.

Ibu Surani is equally proud of her dairy cows. She says they are like part of the family. Before the FMD outbreak in Sengon village in May of 2022, Ibu Surani had 5 cows and one bull. She fed her cows concentrate feed and forage, but the commercial concentrate was designed for beef, not dairy cattle. On that feed regime, Ibu Surani's cows only achieved, on average, 10 litres of milk a day, and at the peak lactation period, 18 litres of milk per day.



Ibu Surani got her feed from the local agri-kiosk run by Pak Suwarno. Ibu Surani received information from Pak Suwarno about a specifically formulated concentrate for dairy cows made by Nufeed. Pak Suwarno was selling trial packs of the feed, so Ibu Surani decided to try the sample pack. Within one month, Ibu Surani noticed a difference in milk production. After using Nufeed dairy concentrate, Ibu Surani's cows produced 15 litres of milk per day and 26 litres during peak lactation. "The milk was much better quality," says Ibu Surani, "you could tell by just tasting it."

Even though the improved quality did not translate to an increased price from her milk collector, Ibu Surani received more income because she produced much more milk. "Even though I pay more for Nufeed, at the end of the day, I still have more money in my pocket," says Ibu Surani. Ibu Surani uses her increased income from improved milk production to rebuild her dairy herd. "All my cows were affected by FMD," says Ibu Surani. "Two milk-giving cows had to be sold for meat to the local market because they were too sick to stand. I got almost nothing for the meat", says Ibu Surani. "I got IDR8 million (AUD800) for the big one and IDR4 million (AUD400) for the other small one. Before FMD, I wouldn't have sold them for less than IDR50 million (AUD5,000)." The third beast, her bull luckily sold during the religious festival of Idul Adha

Even though it costs me IDR1 million a month, I still give my cow 4 kilograms of feed daily along with rice bran, cassava, and forage. The Nufeed keeps my cows fat.

Ibu Surani, a dairy cow farmer, Desa Sengon

before FMD hit her village.

Ibu Surani's 3 remaining cattle survived the FMD outbreak, and her one milk-giving cow has just given birth, giving her 3 cows and one bull. While FMD has affected milk production significantly, Ibu Surani continues to give Nufeed to her milk-giving cow. "Even though it costs me IDR1 million a month, I still give my cow 4 kilograms of feed daily along with rice bran, cassava, and forage. The Nufeed keeps my cows fat," says Ibu Surani.

Even though most cows in Ibu Surani's village have recovered from the FMD outbreak, milk production is still low. "After 3 months since recovering from FMD, cows using Nufeed are still only producing 6 to 7 litres of milk a day," explains Ibu Surani, "But other farmers in the village who don't use Nufeed are only getting 2 litres a day," states Ibu Surani. "I will keep using the concentrate

because my cows are slowly recovering," she says.

Ibu Surani says she is happy that her increased milk production allows her to feed her cows. "I also want to put money away for my children," says Ibu Surani. Now Ibu Surani is advising her neighbours to try Nufeed. "My neighbour Rukimin is now using Nufeed," says Ibu Surani with a smile. "I don't want people to think I am big-headed," says Ibu Surani, "but when they ask me why my cows look so good, I tell them to get Nufeed from the kiosk."



A dairy cows farm in Central Java



The hard fall

The road to recovery for smallholder pig farmers in NTT

Ibu Mikhaela, a pig farmer in Wakuliwu village in Sikka district on the island of Flores, NTT

PRISMA is partnering with pig feed and breed companies to improve farmers' access to better quality inputs and increase incomes. African Swine Fever (ASF) spread through pig populations in NTT in 2019 and outbreaks continue to impact animals and farmers. PRISMA is supporting public and private sector partners to encourage the uptake of biosecurity measures on smallholder farms and prevent further losses.

Ibu Mikhaela Immaculata stands outside her door, looking at the small patch of maize she is growing in her front garden. Two large lontar palms stand on either side of her small piece of land. Resting against the palms are long bamboo poles fashioned into ladders. "My husband climbs the palms to harvest the lontar fruit to make moke," explains Ibu Mikhaela. "That's how we survive day-to-day right now. Kasianus sells the moke on the roadside by the litre so we can eat."

Ibu Mikhaela is a pig farmer in Wakuliwu village in Sikka district on the island of Flores, NTT. Pigs are big business in Flores. Pigs are used in all ceremonies and are an integral part of the culture. In 2015, PRISMA started helping pig farmers like Ibu Mikhaela increase their income by working with feed and breed companies to improve farmers' access to better quality inputs.

As a result of this work, pig farmers like Ibu Mikhaela could access high-quality piglets, a better feed regime, and knowledge of better husbandry practices. The fattening time for pigs was reduced from 18 to 4 months. With the help of an initial loan in 2017 from a farming cooperative working with the feed company, Malindo, Ibu Mikhaela purchased good-quality piglets. The loan included embedded services of concentrate feed, information, and support services, including that of a vet. With this loan package, over 4 years, Mikhaela was able to increase her pig numbers from 2 to 25. Rather than pig breeding being a side income for the family, Mikhaela's pig farming was the primary income.

Ibu Mikhaela and Bapak Kasianus could afford to purchase additional land, planning to expand their farm to include cattle. However, in early 2020 NTT was hit by 2 significant shocks. The first was ASF, a highly contagious virus that swept through NTT, virtually wiping out the pig population. The second was COVID-19, which resulted in supply chain disruptions and saw restrictions in social movement. These restrictions meant many farming groups and cooperatives disbanded, including the one Mikhaela was part of.



We were thinking about the future one minute, and the next minute our dreams crumbled before our eyes.

Mikhaela, a pig farmer, Sikka District, Flores Island, NTT

“I couldn’t believe it,” says Ibu Mikhaela. “We were thinking about the future one minute, and the next minute our dreams crumbled before our eyes.” Everyone in Wakuliwu village was affected by ASF. Despite setting up a quarantine perimeter and implementing strict health protocols, none of Ibu Mikhaela’s pigs survived. “The vet said flies could carry the virus, and

flies do not respect health protocols,” says Ibu Mikhaela wryly. “We used antimalaria mosquito nets over our pens to stop the flies, but it was not enough.” Gradually all of Ibu Mikhaela’s pigs

succumbed to the disease. “I cried and screamed as I sterilised the house and pens,” says Ibu Mikhaela softly.

“There was nothing else I could do.” Since ASF hit, Mikhaela and Kasianus have struggled to make ends meet. “During the lontar season, we get income from selling moke on the roadside,”

says Mikhaela. “We have also sold the land we bought from the profits of my pigs,” she explains.

Because everyone’s pigs died and capital is short, the buyer pays off the land in instalments. The land sale enables Ibu Mikhaela to continue to support her son’s university fees, and the family can eat. “Without the savings from the pigs, we would be living a tough life,” admits Ibu Mikhaela. With only 10 percent of the pig population left in Sikka, it may be some time before Ibu Mikhaela will take another loan to restart her pig business. While ASF infection numbers are reducing, the outbreak remains active, and community confidence is low.

“I want to continue with the good quality piglets and concentrate feed, but I need to ensure that my piglets will not die first,” says Ibu



Ibu Mikhaela with husband.



A group of pigs is given concentrate feed.

Mikhaela. While all the members of Ibu Mikhaela's pig rearing group, Wawi Dadi (Pigs Forever), recognise that using good breed and concentrate feed is best, most farmers still need to be ready to move beyond traditional methods. "No one has spare cash at the moment," explains Ibu Mikhaela. "And many have now accumulated debt."

Ibu Mikhaela was recently given a local piglet from one of her family

members a month ago to raise, and so far, so good. Ibu Mikhaela has been rigorous with safety protocols, and there have been no signs of ASF in the new pig. "I will try for one more month using locally foraged food. If this pig survives, I will consider returning to concentrate feed," says Ibu Mikhaela.

It is too early to say how long it will be before the pig sector in Sikka recovers. The good news

is that institutional changes made by the breed and feed companies remain in place. Families like Ibu Mikhaela's have weathered the storm better than others because of investments made from savings. However, the length of the outbreak overlayed by COVID-19 does mean that farmers have a long way to go before reaching pre-ASF dreams.



Building back better life after foot and mouth disease

Ibu Warsiyem is from a long line of rice farmers who have kept cows as a source of income. Ibu Warsiyem's parents used to keep water buffalo, but as land sizes have decreased and hand tractors have taken over the work of water buffalo, Ibu Warsiyem and her husband reverted to beef cattle. She kept one cow to complement the family income. Ibu Warsiyem's husband spent many hours a day searching for fodder for the cow, and they supplemented the grass with rice straw. It took Ibu Warsiyem over a year to sufficiently fatten her cow for sale. She sold her cow aged 1.5 years, with a purchase price of IDR14.5 million, for

IDR23 million after one year of feeding.

In 2020, Ibu Warsiyem met a farmer from a neighbouring village at the local agri-kiosk. 'This farmer was buying Nutrifeed concentrate feed for his cattle, and so I asked him whether it works,' says Ibu Warsiyem. 'He told me the proof was in his cattle and that I could come and see them before he sold them to the market for the big Eid al-Adha festival.' Ibu Warsiyem took up the invitation and was so impressed by what she saw that she started buying feed directly from the farmer, who was a distributor for Nutrifeed.

Within 4 months, Ibu Warsiyem saw a considerable difference in the weight gain of her cow, even though she was only giving 2 kilograms of feed rather than the full recommended daily dose of 8kg. When Ibu Warsiyem and her husband saw the potential of the cattle business, they decided to invest in another cow. 'We see it as revolving our capital,' explains Ibu Warsiyem, 'We sell our cows to buy rice seed, and then we sell our rice harvest to buy more cows,' she explains with a laugh.

By 2021, Ibu Warsiyem and her husband had 5 head of cattle, all fed with Nutrifeed. After discussions at a farmers' gathering in Klaten with Nila, the marketing manager for



Nutrifeed, Ibu Warsiyem and her husband upgraded their cattle pen with concrete floors and concrete washable feed and water troughs. That year at the Eid al-Adha festival, they sold their cattle for around IDR48 million a head, experiencing a 943 per cent income increase from cattle sales compared to 2020.

In July 2022, FMD struck, and Ibu Warsiyem's village was in the red zone. All of Ibu Warsiyem's 6 cattle contracted FMD, but they survived. Ibu Warsiyem puts this down to their feeding regime but admits she also had her cattle vaccinated. In comparison, her neighbour's cows were fodder fed, and all 3 died. Because the FMD outbreak



We still feed our cattle Nutrifeed, and we will continue to do so until we can no longer farm.

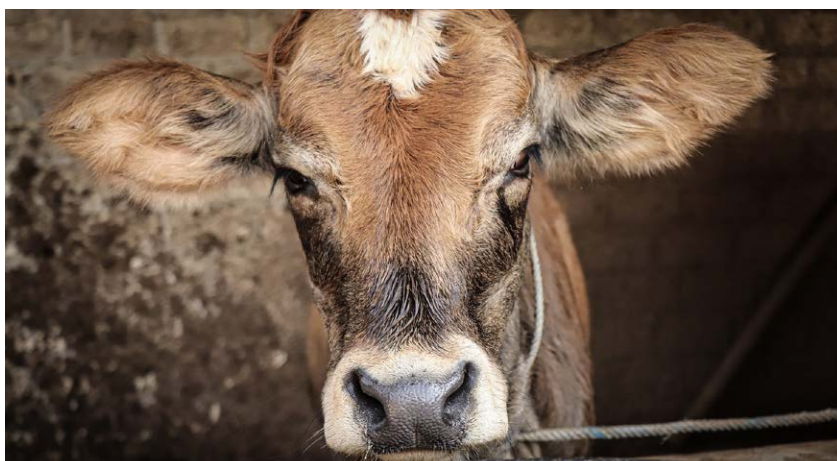
Warsiyem, a cow farmer, Klaten District, Central Java.

was close to Eid al-Adha, Ibu Warsiyem could sell 5 of her cows at the market rate, but one she kept because it was still limping. Ibu Warsiyem said she got information from Nutrifeed on disinfecting her cattle pens and other biosecurity measures. 'Because I was paid a deposit for my cows for the Eid al-Adha festival, I worked extra hard to ensure they stayed alive,' said Ibu Warsiyem. 'My neighbour had to pay back his deposit because all his cows died. That was a huge burden for many farmers at that time.'

Ibu Warsiyem used the profit from the sale of her cows to grow back her herd. She is still using biosecurity measures, but only once a week. It is now

close to the Eid al-Adha festival once more, and Ibu Warsiyem is informing her 1,500 TikTok followers on how to keep their cattle fat and healthy. While she admits she spent a year being a Nutrifeed agent, she stopped doing it because there are so many more agents now that it no longer made it profitable. 'Plus, I am getting older,' she explains, laughing, 'I can still do TikTok for my fellow farmers on how to get your cows fat, but the feed sales I now leave to the younger generation.'

Ibu Warsiyem and her husband have no plans to stop raising cattle. 'We still feed our cattle Nutrifeed, and we will continue to do so until we can no longer farm,' says Ibu Warsiyem.





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