

HOW ONE SMALLHOLDER BENEFITED FROM PARTNERSHIP WITH ASIAN AGRICULTURE

A few years ago Bikrizan was unsure how he would feed his family.

Bikrizan relied on outdated farming techniques in Pelalawan Regency in Riau Province. As a consequence, the land suffered from low yields, bad weather and pest problems. As it became infertile, he would set fires to clear a new area.

Today, Bikrizan's life has improved and he is able to provide a good living for his wife and two children. By partnering with Asian Agri, he has been able to double the yield of his eight hectares of oil palm plantation and provide his children with a good education.

"I am a man with a plan now. I know what I am going to do to feed my family and I know I can fulfill their needs," he said.



Bikrizan was born in the area, and inherited the land from his family. Although he is proud to be a Pelalawan native, he realizes that he can not take it for granted.

"Just because our families have lived here for generations and have our own land, it doesn't mean that we can automatically have a good life," he said, pointing to the fact that many of his relatives still live in poverty without a steady income.

In the past Bikrizan practiced a simple clearing method by burning land for crop planting. Not only does this damage the environment, such fires can spread out of control, and contribute to the haze which has badly affected neighboring countries.

"We burned forests to open land for planting. After some time, we left the land as we found it no longer fertile. Burning and moving become our habits," he said.

Yields were low and bad weather or a problem with pests could cause serious difficulties. “We didn’t know for sure if we can earn enough to survive the next day,” said Bikrizan.

Like many, his parents began planting oil palm as big companies started to enter Riau in the early 1990s. Although the crop is a potentially lucrative one, it provided difficult to ensure a reliable supply. “We had a hard time to get a good harvest,” he said.

In 2012, Bikrizan decided to join **training conducted by Asian Agri**. The company supported him by providing financial and management assistance for his plantation.

As a result, he was prepared for pest prevention and given higher yielding **seeds by the company**. His yields are higher now and he is able to manage his plantation sustainably.



 ASIAN AGRI

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Bikrizan
Independent smallholder
from Kampung Baru, Ukui

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“I can double my plantation’s production which has increased my income. In the past, I can only get 1-2 tons per hectare, but after getting support from Asian Agri, the yields increase to 4-5 tons per hectare. My income is doubled from 1-2 million rupiah to 2-4 million rupiah per month,” said Bikrizan.

Asian Agri pioneered one of the largest smallholder partnership schemes in Indonesia, working with thousands of farmers like Bikrizan. Of the 160,000 hectares of oil palm plantations managed by Asian Agri, 40% belong to smallholders who are part of the government's Plasma program. This program was designed to help local communities improve their livelihood.

Ade, Asian Agri's coordinator for independent smallholders explained that the company provides guidance, training and financial support.

"Our independent smallholders now can increase their productivity, and by doing so, increase their earning and prosperity."

Building a partnership with Asian Agri also requires smallholders to also apply sustainable principles.

For Bikrizan, life has never been better. "Every day I go to work happily as I know what I can get. My family is happy and as a result I can plan the best education for my children. I hope we have a brighter future," he said.