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“Utilisation of diversity in land use systems:
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Land-Use Diversification as a Strategy to Cope with Long Drought Periods: A Case Study from Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT), Indonesia

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Abstract

Changes in weather conditions due to global warming have an influence on agricultural production. Long drought periods caused by El Nino directly influenced food supply in Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT) province, Indonesia during the last years. The paper is based on data collected through mass-media, discussion and interviews with local authorities, communities, non governmental organizations, community based organizations, research centers, and local news-papers in NTT.

From the end of 2006 to the beginning of 2007, 16 districts in the province faced longer dry-seasons than usually. This caused planting and harvest failures especially for the dry-land commodities. The provincial office for food security expected a food crisis at community level as a result of the long-dry seasons. The NTT's coordination and implementation committee of disaster predicted that a total of 116,634 households or about 467,673 people would be affected. In February 2007 food stocks available at governmental and community levels was sufficient only to cover the community's need for food for the next 1.5 month up to April 2007. The office predicted that the farmer's total harvest production could cover their needs for the next four months until June 2007. This means that even if the next rainy season comes on time there will still be several months of food deficit before the next planting season in November 2007 to February 2008. Therefore the local government suggested to the farmers to plant various beans (green beans and soybeans) or tuber (cassava) towards the end of the rainy season. Farmers of several communities in NTT have developed land-use diversification strategies to cope with the long drought periods.

The land-use diversification strategies developed by the local communities can be effective in coping with food deficit after long drought periods.

Keywords: Community, food deficit, land-use diversification strategy, long drought