



Agrome IQ: SMART SOLUTION TO AGRICULTURE

Agriculture has transformed into a sector that remarkably boosts the ASEAN economy. A study shows that the contribution of agriculture accounts for both 25% of ASEAN's total GDP and 25% of total employment in the region.

Writer: Michael Francis Editor: Annisa Maghfira



“

I believe that by providing technology and skills support, we can create a more dynamic growing community that is capable of supplying the local needs and in the future, the regional needs.

Vanessa Teo

”

Naturally, young entrepreneurs across the ASEAN region are racing to start their agri-businesses. Dr. Vanessa Teo, an agri-preneur from Brunei Darussalam, is one of them. Through Agrome IQ, she created a platform that helps agri-preneurs connect to technology.

Agrome IQ focuses on agriculture educational technology that supports young generation of growers. Through this social enterprise, Vanessa has been developing training curriculum that utilises digital platforms and is integrated into schools and community initiatives in Brunei. According to Vanessa, the biggest challenge for her effort in integrating new technology into agriculture sector is to understand the growers individual needs and resources.

“We believe in elevating the education of the farmers, which can empower them to make effective decisions for their own farms,” said Vanessa.

She also hopes that Agrome IQ can contribute more to the food supplies in Brunei, which still depends on imports from other countries. Furthermore, she said that “by providing technology and skills support, we



can create a more dynamic growing community that is capable of supplying the local needs and in the future, the regional needs.”

So far, Agrome IQ has trained over 200 students across 4 schools using Sprout IQ Agricultural Educational Program. In addition, the programme has taught more than 30 members of the public in growing over 55 different types of crops. Her achievements didn't go unnoticed as she managed to win various awards, including ASEAN Rice Bowl Startup Awards 2017, Finalist for the Create Alibaba Cloud Startup Contest 2017, and Top 5 out of 52 Commonwealth countries in the Pitch at Palace Commonwealth Competition, United Kingdom.

Future plan for Southeast Asia's Agriculture

Agrome IQ also supports Brunei Vision 2035 through the development of agricultural technology education curriculum which aims to create a generation of agri-preneurs that are digitally savvy, resource-efficient, and entrepreneurial. Meanwhile, for future expansion, Vanessa is planning to create even more platforms to support and benefit more farmers in Southeast Asia.

Agrome IQ is expected to build strong partnerships that provide local domain expertise and ensure that the digital agricultural platform brings positive impact to the farmers. She sees technology as a tool that provides farmers with a better access to improve farms' productivity and thus, the farmers' livelihoods.

“In my opinion, the new phase of agriculture touches upon the integration of farming, entrepreneurship, and technology that can create opportunity for innovations within farm management processes and, more importantly, in the entire value chain itself,” said Vanessa.

In trying to emphasise her point about the important role of youth in agriculture, she encourages young agripreneurs of ASEAN to pay more attention to what's going on around the world of agriculture, especially now that globalisation has arrived.

“Globalisation means there are no more borders between neighboring countries, which is good because now we have the opportunity to learn from other countries' best practices, while keeping in mind of the challenges we are facing in our countries,” said Vanessa.